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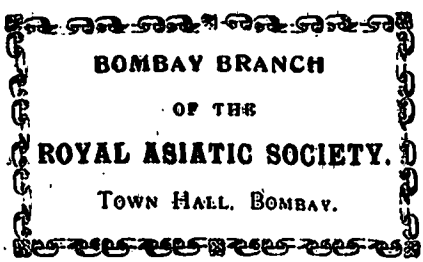

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"NEW VIEWS ON IRELAND."

"NEW VIEWS ON IRELAND."

OR,

IRISH LAND:

GRIEVANCES: REMEDIES.

BY

CHARLES RUSSELL, Q.C., M.P.

27002

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PREFACE.

THE substance of the following pages has recently appeared in a series of letters in the *Daily Telegraph* under the first title here prefixed to them, "New Views on Ireland."

That rather ambitious title was given by the Editor, not by me. It has, however, been preserved for the sake of identity.

I ask only that these pages may be regarded as an honest contribution to the discussion of the most difficult, as it is the most pressing, question of our time. I bring to that discussion some practical experience in former years, and an interest which has lasted all my life.

Thinking men regard the settlement of the Land System as the foundation-stone of prosperity in Ireland.

What I have written I have written from a sense of duty. I have striven to be fair.

I have written from no standpoint of class, of politics, or of religion. I have sought to discuss the question as one which affects all classes in Ireland, and not Ireland alone, but the Empire.

I have given the result of my examination of a portion of Kerry, which is fairly typical of the parts of Ireland, whose condition most urgently calls for improvement. I have gone into details, where I thought it necessary, to enable the reader to appreciate what are the actual lives of large classes of men and women in Ireland in this day.

For the rest, I must allow my sketches of Irish tenant life in the Kingdom of Kerry to tell their own story.

It has been a pain to me to be obliged to make statements which could hardly fail, at times, to wound. It seemed to me impossible, honestly, to avoid making them.

As might have been expected, the accuracy of my information has been questioned. It will be for the judgment of the reader to determine whether, in any essential part, it has been successfully impeached.

I present the full means of judgment. I have thought it right to set out in the Appendix every signed Letter brought to my attention, written by any

one with authority to speak, which has purported to impugn my statements. I have also there set forth my Letters in reply.

After attempting to illustrate the condition of things which seems to require redress, I have ventured to draw in outline a Remedial Scheme.

I have done so with diffidence and distrust.

It may need, in its application, many safeguards and qualifications, but, I firmly believe that it lays down the main lines, on which alone can be built, a complete and permanent settlement of the Irish Land Question.

C. R.

TEMPLE, 14*th December*, 1880.

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It cannot be doubted that the state of Ireland is such as to give rise to alarm, and serious alarm. I refuse, however, to believe that life and property are, as is frequently represented, generally insecure there.

Speaking from recent personal observation of a great part of Ireland, including portions of the severely distressed districts, I do not believe that insecurity to be widespread. In times like these it is not wise to lend too ready a credence to the tale of the alarmist. All crime in Ireland has at once attributed to it an agrarian character, where that is possible, and this often erroneously. After taking much pains to inform myself on the matter, I say it is more than doubtful whether two murderous outrages—one quite recent—which, from the rank of the victims, attracted more than ordinary atten-

tion, are not traceable to causes wholly different. In connection with the latter of these, too, it was stated, as proof of the brutalised condition of the people, that admission for the dead body was refused into a neighbouring cottage. Very slight inquiry would have shown that this was but the expression of a superstitious feeling which exists not only in Ireland, but along portions of the Scotch and English coasts.

In point of general crime, Ireland compares favourably with the rest of the kingdom. The assizes for the most part have been white-gloved. Apart from all exaggeration, however, the sad truth is that the country has been stained with several grave crimes of an agrarian character —worse still, these crimes meet with a considerable amount of sympathy among the masses. In a people not wanting in general morality, these facts are the more significant. They give rise to serious reflection. They remind Englishmen that, although the fate of the island has been in their hands practically for seven centuries, they have not yet succeeded in winning the heart of Ireland—they have not yet brought content to the country.

Nor can it be said that this is due to the perverse character of the people, who are discontented where they ought to be contented. In truth, one finds in Ireland at this day such a condition of things, such a low state of social life widely prevailing, that it would be a matter of reproach to the people if they were contented. If, further, one asks the question whether the condition is the fault of the people themselves in that they are thriftless,

dissolute and lazy, the answer is that this same people, under different conditions in other lands, are fighting the battle of life as bravely and as creditably as the rest of their kind.

It was once said, "In a climate soft as a mother's smile, in a soil fruitful as God's love, the Irish peasant mourns." There is here, indeed, the poet's exaggeration; but the sober truth remains that in a country whose fruitfulness would suffice to feed and maintain a greatly increased population in decent condition, there exists at this moment, in a population which famine and emigration have diminished from eight millions to about five millions, a more intense degree of wretchedness and poverty, and that more general, than in any known country in the world.

After a close survey of a great part of Ireland, I return to England astonished not so much at the outrages that have taken place, horrible and deplorable as they are, as at the patience and even the cheerfulness with which the great mass of the people bear their penury. It is but a short span which separates them from actual starvation.

Nor let it be supposed that this condition of things is exceptional—in the sense that the recent bad harvests have changed a prosperous into a wretched people. Ireland has had a sad recurring experience in famines. The famine of 1822—not to go further back—partially repeated in 1831, again with awful intensity recurring in 1846–47, and ending with the acute distress of 1879–80, these show how narrow is the line which divides the mass

of the people from actual want. They are normally on the verge of famine.

If this state of things gravely concerns Ireland and Irishmen, does it not concern England and Englishmen too? It is not surprising, then, that reflecting men in and out of Ireland should ask themselves the question whether there must not be here something radically wrong—whether, if the destinies of Ireland had been in her own hands, this state of things could or would have happened. It is not surprising that Irishmen should object to have their country paraded amongst the nations with periodical begging-box in hand, praying the world's charity for daily bread. It is not surprising that they should feel a sense of cruel neglect in that their country is left under the influence of unredressed though practically admitted wrongs.

The public opinion of to-day points, with a remarkable directness and force, to the state of the land law in Ireland as the great cause of the wretched condition of the people.

The Devon Commission of 1845, a landlord commission, had done as much, and yet it required the lapse of a quarter of a century, with its history of wasted lives and wretched existence, before a statesman with even the genius and the resolution of Mr. Gladstone could compel English public opinion to do a tardy and, as I conceive, imperfect act of justice in the Land Act of 1870.

I do not underestimate that Act. It was a great effort of resolute statemanship, but it was tried under unfavourable conditions. Several good years had taken

place; the country was almost prosperous; commodities were at their highest. Hardly, however, had the Act passed till there began that decadence which culminated in the partial famine of last year. The Act had not contemplated such a state of things, and did not meet it. In a state of continual rise in prices and prosperity it might possibly have worked; as it was, it was severely tried.

But more; in many parts of the country the landlord class deliberately set themselves to evade it. Even in Ulster I have been informed of many cases in which the landlords have made the condition of their tenants since the Act less favourable than it was before. I doubt not the evidence taken under the Land Commission will disclose this.

Events since 1870 have tended rapidly to ripen public opinion on the land question, and tended also to modify the conditions under which it can be approached. The Encumbered Estates Act having broken up many old estates, they have passed into the hands of owners, who, unaffected by old traditions or high views of the duties of property, have looked mainly to the percentage return which their investment would bring them. Irish tenants have thus often found, that a rich but greedy landlord was worse than a needy one.

The question, too, is now freed from what have been called the antagonistic complications of race and creed. In candour I must say amongst the worst landlords I have known have been Catholics and Irishmen. Neither are bad landlords confined to any one political party.

But it would require an exalted virtue, to which the landlord class lay no claim, to have prevented them from exercising the powers which the law gave to them. If they were anxious to be exacting, the tenant class themselves gave them the opportunity of being so, by that indecent scramble for land which seemed to offer some justification for the demand of exorbitant and impossible rents. It is the system, then, and not so much the landlord class, I desire to attack.

How is this system to be altered? This being the question of the day, I desire to make my contribution to its discussion. I am no agitator. I wish to see my country freed from the reproach of agrarian crime. I wish to see its people contented, and I am persuaded that neither result can be accomplished until there has been a thorough and radical change in the land system of the country.

Do not let Englishmen suppose that the state of things in Ireland is the work of Land Leaguers. I am not their apologist. I regret and condemn much that has been reported as spoken by members of that body. But at the most they are but formulating, and giving articulate expression to, the feelings of black discontent which lie deep down in the breasts of the Irish peasants.

They would cut but a sorry figure if they were not the exponents of real grievances. The voice of the agitator would fall idly on the ear of the farmer whose homestead is secured to him, who has anything to lose. The best armour against the shafts of the agitator is the sense of property, but this the bulk of the Irish peasantry have

not. They have little to lose. Living under a Constitution which probably secures at once the maximum of individual liberty and of public security, the majority of the Irish people have felt little of its benefits. Its impersonation for them has been for the most part the landlord's bailiff, the policeman, or the *posse comitatus* of the sheriff.

I know that at this moment these sentiments will grate upon the public ear in England. I am sorry; I cannot help it. I feel, holding firmly the views that I do, I would fail in my duty if I did not endeavour to mitigate that loud cry for coercion which now rings through the land. Surely this country has had experience enough of the effects of a coercive policy. You may, indeed, dam up for a time the troubled waters of agitation, but, if their living source remain, you are but preparing in the future for a great disaster.

In this condition of things, what is the attitude of the Irish landlords? Recently, in solemn deputation, a number of them wait upon the Lord-Lieutenant, and they ask for protection for life. To this they are entitled. It suggests grave reflections on past and present landlord management that such a demand should be supposed to be necessary. But let that pass. To protection they are entitled. Let them have it. I yield to no one in my desire to see crime put down and punished. Safety is the first condition of all society. But I protest against the crimes of the few being made the ground for coercing the many. I protest, too, against a policy which would relegate into a distant future, until the country, held

tight by the throat, was silenced, all consideration of remedial legislation.

But are the landlords prepared to do more than ask for protection for themselves? Are they prepared to rise to the height of this great occasion, and, abandoning for ever those absolute notions which the law encouraged, are they prepared to make sacrifices to settle this heart-burning question? Are they prepared to recognise the fact that they are no longer to be legislated for as a foreign garrison in a hostile country? With pleasure I noted that that deputation had no representatives of those great estates whose owners' names stand high in the category of what are called good landlords in Ireland. No one has, so far, heard of outrages upon the estates of the families of Devonshire, Powerscourt, Fitzwilliam, Downshire, Portsmouth, Bessborough, amongst many others. I am loth to write anything that would bear even the semblance of apology for outrage, but truth compels me to say that the scenes of most outrages have been previously associated with harsh and unjust landlord management.

I do not confound all Irish landlords in one class. I know many have striven to do their duty. But it is hard for the Irish landlord to be honest under the existing system; the temptations are great; to Irish landlords the temptations are all the greater, seeing they are, as a rule, men of narrow means. They are suffering—many of them—for the sins of unthrift of those who have gone before them. Nor do I overlook the misery which in recent years the distressful times have brought to many men of this class. Failure in rent meant to these men

inability to discharge estate charges—dower—younger children's portions—interest on mortgages, to say nothing of that crippling in domestic life which genteel poverty acutely feels. Much allowance is to be made for them.

I cannot, however, acquit them of want of judgment and of consideration in recent years. They did not recognise the fact, as they might early have done, that their tenants and themselves were alike suffering from a common disaster. They missed a great opportunity. If, early in the trouble, they had met their tenants by timely allowance, much ill-blood would have been spared, and the rent receipts would have been at least as great as they are. They did not do this. The attempt to extract the whole rent was general; and it was only when agitation had, as the people think, compelled concession, that any abatement was made. But worse still. Landlords of ample means were found extracting rents from miserable tenants without abatement—aye, from tenants living by charity—and were found to justify their conduct on the ground that to abate the rent would, forsooth, weaken the tenants' sense of the obligation of contract! But out of evil good comes. The miseries of the last few years have attracted—have compelled—public attention to this question. Opinion has ripened upon it as opinion has rarely ripened before.

I believe that, with such help as the State may properly give, this question can in the main be settled on perfectly just principles, involving, indeed, some sacrifice on the part of the landlord class, but no sacrifice of any just right which they now possess. The time is ripe for this settlement. In conversation with many landlords in Ireland

recently I was glad to find that this view generally prevailed. It exists universally among the peasant farmers from north to south.

Variations of opinion as to the remedy undoubtedly exist; but, when you find the Orange meetings in Ulster called to denounce the agitation of Mr. Parnell, not less strong in their condemnation of the existing land law, nor less emphatic as to the necessity for thorough remedial legislation, it is plain enough that Ulsterman and Munsterman, Catholic and Protestant alike, recognise the necessity for prompt legislation on the subject. It is, too, a fact worthy of note, that at the recent elections in Ireland the necessity for land law reform was put in the foreground of almost every candidate's address, Liberal and Conservative alike.

I have recently made a careful examination of a portion of Ireland not much frequented by travellers—namely, its south-west corner, and I should be glad to be allowed to give the result of my observations in what is called the Kingdom of Kerry. It contains estates where one would expect to find the best examples of good landlordism—I mean the estates of exalted persons whose ample means would at least render unnecessary severe exactions from their tenants. It contains also one illustration of the management of corporate estates in Ireland —that of Trinity College, Dublin. In its economic conditions, also, Kerry differs from most other parts of Ireland, and it illustrates the proposition which I shall hereafter take leave to submit—namely, that no one plan will meet the case of Irish tenants, but that the

true solution of the question will be found in the application of different plans to differing conditions of things. It is worth adding that Kerry, when I visited it, was free from all Land League influence: there was no branch of that body in the county.

I shall ask to be allowed to preface my remedial suggestions with the statement of some considerations (not always present to the English mind) why Ireland's condition calls for legislation, special and exceptional. Not alone its general history, but direct legislation in the past have helped to make its case exceptional. Exceptional legislation is now called for to undo the errors of the past.

CHAPTER II.

KILLARNEY TO CAHIRCIVEEN.

Route in Kerry—Difficulty of obtaining information—Tenants' dread of Agent and Bailiff—Neglected condition of Lord Ventry's Estate at Killorglin—Food of the People—Catholic Chapel on Mr. Winn's Estate seized by Contractor for Debt—Rent Raisings—Wretched state of Mr. Morrogh Bernard's Tenants at Roads—Excessive Rents—Norah Golden's Story as told by herself.

THE route which I followed was from Killarney to Cahirciveen, viâ Killorglin, keeping the shore line thence to Valentia, Waterville, Loher, and through the gap of Coom-a-kesta to Derrynane, thence along the Kenmare river, viâ Sneem, to Kenmare, and thence back again to Killarney by the well-known tourist road. Along this route we entered many houses and conversed with many of the tenant class.

I had hoped to have been able to reproduce the particulars, with names of each case, which I thought exemplified the existing unsound condition of things, but I early became painfully impressed with the fact that to do so might work cruel wrong. I found the greatest dread prevailing amongst the tenants of having their names disclosed. At first I had difficulty in even getting them to converse, until they became assured

that our feelings were friendly towards them, but even then, with hardly an exception, they spoke protesting that it would be ruin to them if it was known that they had communicated any facts to us.

I do not doubt that this dread was to some extent, uncalled for, but it was assuredly real. Nothing impressed me more than the state of terror in which, speaking as a rule, they seemed to live. One man, apparently well to do, was mentioning a circumstance of some significance in the agent's management; but upon perceiving that the shorthand writer who accompanied me was taking a note of his observation, he became alarmed, and said it would be ruin to him if he were known to have said anything about the agent, and requested us on no account to mention his name.

On another occasion, and on the same estate, a remarkable incident occurred. A man who was a high-class type of the Kerry peasant, commanding in figure, with an intelligent and even refined face, upon our meeting him on the threshold of his door (we had been told that his case was a hard one), drew himself to his full height, and, raising his hands earnestly, cried out, "For God's sake, gentlemen, pass me by—pass me by!" We were startled. We afterwards learned that years ago he had given information as to the management of the estate to the representative of a southern paper in Ireland, and it had been noticed that he had, since this time, been made to feel the weight of the agent's ill-will.

For these reasons I reluctantly abstain from giving the names of the tenants whose cases I investigated, but

I can assure my readers that I used every precaution to arrive at the truth in each instance.

Occasionally lightheartedness and cheerfulness appeared amongst the tenantry, but these were rare; and the humour with which the Irish peasant is frequently credited has, if it ever existed, been stamped out of Kerry by the sad realities of their lives of want. With all this they have managed to preserve a certain dignity and grace of manner, and they are very intelligent.

Their dwellings, as a rule, are wretched in the extreme, and, as a rule, too, order and cleanliness are wanting there, and yet in their persons they are not uncleanly. Their children, of whom I saw great numbers on their way to and from school, exhibited in the circumstances wonderful neatness and cleanliness. Nothing could exceed the simple courtesy with which we were made welcome in their wretched dwellings.

Our first close examination and inquiry were at and in the neighbourhood of Killorglin, upon the property of Lord Ventry, whose Irish rental amounts to some £30,000 per annum. Even in this town—the most considerable between Killarney and Cahirciveen—hovels of the most wretched kind existed, in what was called by the parish priest of the place, Father O'Sullivan, with grim humour, "the west-end of the town."

There were mud cabins, without windows, sometimes without doors, the smoke making its escape as best it could from the door or through a hole in the roof, for they had no chimneys, and frequently only one room

for living and sleeping, although the families consisted of numbers varying from three to six or seven. Some corn mills afforded the only industrial occupation.

Leaving the mail-coach road to Rossbegh we proceeded by the lower road, by Dœux, along the shore of Castlemaine Bay. The holdings are small, the condition of the people miserable, as shown not merely in the character of their dwellings, but in their mean and scant apparel and in their gaunt appearance. The quality of the land is poor, and no inconsiderable part of it bore signs of recent reclamation. I saw one, and only one, decent house along this road, between Killorglin and Rossbegh, and upon inquiry, it turned out to be the house of one of Lord Ventry's bailiffs. He had not only a good farm, but a salary, "to say nothing of his perquisites," as my informant significantly added.

The rents, as compared with Griffith's valuation, were certainly not high. The tenants made but few complaints of harsh treatment. Lord Ventry does not, to his credit be it said, seem to have availed himself of the recent distress to eject his tenants. But everywhere was written in unmistakable characters, "Neglect, neglect, neglect." One drain, which might be called arterial, appeared in the course of execution, made with money borrowed from the Board of Works; but except this, and two pumps by the roadside, built recently by the Union authorities, (to supply the people with better water than the bog drainings which they had previously been in the habit of using,) there was no sign of any attempt at improvement—except in the patchy kind of reclamation

effected by the tenants themselves. Almost on every side, however, was lying land which seemed to be capable of reclamation, and which I cannot doubt, if in the hands of tenants with security of fixed possession and fixed Rent, would be found to be worth reclaiming. I have spoken of the scant clothing of the people. Potatoes, while they last, are their habitual food, with, now and then, fish. Flesh meat is practically unknown amongst them. When the potatoes fail, their food is Indian, or, as they call it, red meal, and occasionally flour.

The character of the farming here is peculiar. So far as tillage is concerned, the spade, and not the plough, is used. Indeed, along this district hardly a plough is to be seen. Nor do the tenants devote themselves principally to tillage. They rely for the payment of their rent mainly upon butter and occasionally the rearing of young stock. They know nothing of the acreage of their farms; these are measured by their grazing capacity, as grass for two cows, three cows, and so on. They till enough for a supply of potatoes and also of oats for the winter feeding of their cattle, but rarely for sale. It is not surprising, looking at the character of their dwellings, that the butter they produce does not command the best price.

For manure, they rely largely upon seaweed and upon the seasand, which, in the boggy land which here abounds, serves as a poor substitute for lime. One often hears the laziness of this class spoken of, and I doubt not that in some, it may be many instances, this imputation is just, but I was struck with the sight of men, women,

and children carrying, piled up in creels or baskets on their backs for long distances, seaweed for manure.

Indeed, it was painfully noticeable how the comeliness and grace of youth soon disappeared under the hard life of exertion to which both sexes were exposed, and how speedily the lithe, supple figure of the girl of ten was transformed into the hard, set, and stunted figure of the woman of twenty. I asked where all the comely girls went to, for they did not appear to be represented in the womanhood of the district. This was my answer.

Some idea of the condition of these people may be gathered from the fact that there were about 4000 persons on the relief lists of the district. I was informed that though Lord Ventry and his agent had not contributed anything to these relief funds, some rent abatement was authorised.

I could not discover any single case in which the tenants had been helped to improve their miserable dwellings. In several instances I did notice recently-built houses, but in every case these had been erected by the tenants themselves. For all such buildings they have not alone to pay the cost of erection, but they are, in addition, taxed for the improved yearly value by an amended rating valuation.

On this estate a curious contrivance was for the first time brought to my notice. The landlord, where the valuation is under £4, by law bears, or ought to bear, the whole poor rate; where above £4 he bears only half, the tenant paying the other half. In this district the rents, or many of them, are very small; but it seems to

be the custom to group together in one receipt for rent several persons who are not connected by relationship, and thus the landlord gets, as security for the entire rent, the guarantee of each of the tenants, and thus the entire instead of half the poor rate is levied from the tenants. Moreover, any default in payment by one of the group is the default of all, and by this means the power over each is greatly increased, since he is made liable for defaults other than his own.

Near Rossbegh is the townland of Aghadoe, the property of a Mr. Wynn, who, I was told, had raised his rents either four or five times since he came into possession, which was about ten years ago. Here, too, was pointed out to us a striking proof of the poverty of the people. A Catholic chapel stands there, newly built, roofed and glazed, the possession of which is sorely needed for the humble worshippers of the district; but the contractor holds possession as security for his debt, which the poverty of the people is unequal to discharging.

From this point, following the coast line, the road runs at an elevation of from 300 to 400 feet above the sea, and along the hillside are magnificent views of Dingle Bay, from the Bar of Inch in the eastern extremity of the bay, to the Blasquet Islands in the west. The land is of the poorest kind, and capable at the most, without extensive drainage, of only a patchy cultivation.

At Kells we passed the property of Mr. Blennerhasset, one of the members for the county. I did not examine it with sufficient fulness to pronounce a safe opinion on its management, but I am in candour obliged to say that I

could not make any favourable comparison between it and the wretched properties which surround it.

Between Kells and Cahirciveen you pass, on the side next the coast, the property of Mr. Morrogh Bernard, and on the other side the Iveragh estate of Lord Lansdowne. My observations on the latter I reserve.

Mr. Bernard's property consists of the mountain of Knockatubber, with a few townlands lying at its base. A bleaker or less inviting spot it would be difficult to imagine, and only hard necessity, one would think, could drive people to its unfriendly bosom in the hope of obtaining a livelihood. We have to do with the part which lies on the northern side of the hill, facing the Atlantic. We approached it from the coastguard's station, at Kells, by a road, even then, almost impassable for horse and cart, and yet this approach to the homesteads of Mr. Bernard's tenants has been made what it now is by the hand of charity!

As a means of relieving the dire distress into which the tenants were plunged, Canon Brosnan, the parish priest of Cahirciveen, out of the charitable funds committed to him, employed Mr. Bernard's tenants in repairing this road. The rents, judged by the Griffith's valuation standard, were high, and I was not surprised to find them considerably in arrear. How they could ever be paid, even under the most favourable conditions, passes my comprehension. They certainly could not come out of the land, and the fishing by which the tenants formerly eked out a scanty subsistence has latterly been beyond

their reach, for their seine nets have been worn out, broken, or lost, and they are too poor to replace them.

I append a list of some of the rents, not selected instances, paid by the tenants, comparing them with Griffith's valuation:

Rent.				Griffith's Valuation.		
£	s.	d.		£	s.	d.
6	0	0	...	2	12	0
4	0	0	...	1	15	0
6	0	0	...	2	5	0
12	0	0	...	4	5	0
9	10	0	...	4	0	0
7	0	0	...	3	5	0

Rent.				Griffith's Valuation.		
£	s.	d.		£	s.	d.
12	13	4	...	5	14	0
11	0	0	...	5	10	0
6	0	0	...	2	5	0
7	0	0	...	3	5	0
43	0	0	...	22	6	0

In every one of these cases the rent had been raised, and raised several times; and in none of these, according to my information, had the landlord done anything to give an improved value to the holdings.

No doubt it is true that Griffith's valuation of this part of the country was made when commodities were low compared with the present time; but the cost of production was low also, and if the fund from which, in such holdings, rent is expected to come be represented by the excess of value of the commodities produced over the cost of production, and if in that cost of production is to be included decent wages or livelihood for those who give to the land its producing power, then I say these lands are let at an excessive figure.

Several stories of hard treatment were told us. I will give one, with name and address, as the poor woman having been evicted from her holding, it is beyond the power of her landlord to injure her further.

On March 25th last—a strict holiday in the Catholic Church—the widow, Norah Goulden, went with her neighbours to attend mass in the Catholic Chapel in the Foilmore Valley, and while she was there, the sheriff's men were breaking in the door of her miserable cabin, and throwing out upon the roadside the few wretched articles which constituted her furniture. Here is her story, told to us by herself. Apparently she was aged about sixty-five years, and, if ever a woman spoke with a sense of wrong upon her, Norah Goulden did. It would seem that the land had been some years ago transferred from her name into that of her son.

"I have held a farm at Roads for forty-two years. I have been twenty-two years a widow. I had the grass of four cows under Morrogh Bernard. The rent, eighteen years ago, was £9 14*s*. It was then raised to £11 6*s*. Three years ago it was raised to £12 13*s*. 4*d*. Griffith's valuation is £5 14*s*. We owed a year's rent on the 1st May, 1879, and a decree was got against us last November. We were turned out on March 25 last, the day of the Annunciation. While I was at mass they broke in my door. It was locked, and they put my furniture on the side of the road.

"Last November fair my son John offered half a year's rent, and it was refused, unless I paid £2 10*s*. for costs. My son went in again to see if he would take it, but it was refused. My son, out of heart, went to America, and the rent we offered, and £3 10*s*. which I borrowed, went to pay his passage to America. His wife and six children are in Cahirciveen with me. The eldest of his children is only nine years, and the youngest two months. My son has sent me over since he went £6 from America. I saw the landlord myself. It was in his new

married time. I laid £10 before his honour, but he refused, saying I was ejected, and he could not make a tenant of me for six months. I went to him the next day, and he gave me the same answer. I followed him in the street, and I had a mind to curse him, as he would not give me the land for my son and long family. I made up the £10 by selling a young springer, and I borrowed 30*s.* from a shopkeeper in this town, John Denneby, and I sold a new milch cow for £7 10*s.* The sheriff's expenses, with £2 13*s.* 4*d.* for the rent, made up the money to £15 7*s.* To-day (18th September) three weeks I sent a bank draft for £15 7*s.* to Morrogh Bernard, at Killarney, and it came back to me by his driver, Morris Collins, the next Wednesday. When I opened the letter the draft was in it. Charley Clifford read the letter for me, and said that it told me to go to Downing, Tralee (Morrógh Bernard's solicitor), and if I settled with him I would get possession again.

"I walked the next day to Tralee, every step of the way, forty miles, until I made out Downing's office. I reached him my letter, and he said it was no value to him. He asked me had I money, and I said I had the redeeming of the land with me. He said 'I can do nothing for you, my poor woman.' I did not get a letter from Morrogh Bernard this length of time. I began to cry to think they would make an ape of me sending me so far. I went again last Thursday fortnight to Tralee and remained there five days. I went then to Mr. Broderick, an attorney, who bears the best name for doing good for the poor of the country. I told him when my son got married I got his name put down for the rent. Mr. Broderick said he had no other case but mine in Killarney, and that he could not go down for my case, unless I paid him £3 10*s.*, but I had only £1. I do not think Mr. Bernard will put me back into the land.

My son drained and fenced the land, and put a road on it. He made more improvements on it than his father did

before him. My son said to Morrogh Bernard, when he brought him the rent, that he improved every inch of the land himself. There was a field on it eighty spades long and fifty spades in breadth (a spade is 5½ feet) that man never worked till my son drained it, and now it is covered with oats. In the old time water would have got in on it over a man's knee boots. There is another field thirty-two spades long, and my son drained it, and now it is in tillage.

"The oats taken out of my garden now is worth 1*s.* 4*d.* a barth (a barth means twenty sheaves). My potato seed was long in the ground when we were put out. The landlord was here on the 8th August last, and he took a foreign road so that he might not meet me the way I could not redeem my land. He knew I was in the town. He said when I offered him the £10 I was not the tenant at all; that the land was in my son's name. He never gave a lease on the property, nor his father before him. Nearly all his tenants got relief from the parish priest during last winter. The rent, I believe, was raised on all the other tenants, same as when it was raised on me."

I leave this story to speak for itself.

CHAPTER III.

TRINITY COLLEGE ESTATE.

Cahirciveen the property of the College—Neglected appearance of the town—Squalid appearance of the Agricultural tenants—Rents very high—Hardships connected with tenants' improvements—Stringent terms when advances made to tenants for improvements—Land reclaimed by tenants without aid from landlords—Story of revaluation of rents—Evil effects of Banking accommodation to the tenants—Especially since 1870—Excessive number of public houses—Ill effects—Local Water supply.

THE property of Trinity College in Kerry includes the town of Cahirciveen, some townlands lying to the south of Cahirciveen, and a portion of the island of Valentia. I was anxious to see how a corporation's estate of this kind is managed. The knowledge I acquired is not reassuring.

The town itself comprises some 2000 inhabitants, and although situate within a mile or so of the slate quarries of Valentia, is so badly paved and flagged that for safety, in the night at least, almost every one walks in the middle of the streets instead of on the pathways. The sewerage arrangements are incomplete, and altogether the town shows less signs of intelligent supervision than any other of similar size which I know of.

Yet I am informed by Captain Needham, their agent, that the College have expended upon the estate some £11,000 since 1867. Further, they have taken advantage of the easy terms upon which Parliament has recently advanced money to landlords in Ireland by borrowing a sum of £5000. Of the £11,000, part seems to have gone in some town sewers, part in the erection of a market house, a fish market, and a small riverside quay. The three last are investments which may not have proved satisfactory.

In a few instances there has been some outlay on the farms of the tenants, in the straightening of fences and boundaries, on which I believe no interest was charged to the tenants. But in other cases where they have sought and obtained assistance to improve they have had to pay, and pay dearly for it. I shall specify some of these.

Speaking of the condition of things generally, a more squalid tenantry than that of this rich corporation it is hardly possible to conceive. As a rule their dwellings are miserable; their food such as I have previously described in the case of Lord Ventry's tenants; their clothes all too scant for comfort, sometimes even for decency.

Yet although I shall show their rents are very high—far higher than they can pay—they are, as a rule, uncomplaining, and certainly I did not find amongst them that bitterness towards the agent which I frequently encountered in other parts of my excursion. This seems to be principally owing to the fact that, where satisfied of the inability of the tenant to pay, he does not harshly pro-

ceed to eject. I subjoin a number of instances showing side by side the rent and Griffith's valuation:

Rent.				Valuation.		
£	s.	d.		£	s.	d.
22	10	0	.....	9	15	0
13	10	0	.....	5	5	0
4	4	0	.....	1	15	0
9	5	0	.....	3	15	0
15	0	0	.....	6	10	0
9	10	0	.....	4	5	0
12	12	0	.....	5	10	0
9	0	0	.....	4	5	0
16	10	0	.....	8	5	0
24	0	0	.....	11	15	0
30	0	0	.....	14	0	0
16	16	0	.....	6	0	0
16	16	0	.....	7	10	0
16	16	0	.....	6	0	0
7	13	0	.....	2	10	0
26	10	0	.....	15	0	0
11	18	0	.....	7	10	0
5	4	0	.....	1	11	0
10	0	0	.....	5	0	0
11	15	0	.....	6	15	0
7	15	0	.....	4	0	0

Rent.				Valuation.		
£	s.	d.		£	s.	d.
11	0	0	.....	6	15	0
12	10	0	.....	5	5	0
3	15	0	.....	3	5	0
13	0	0	.....	8	5	0
12	15	0	.....	5	10	0
9	15	0	.....	1	19	0
6	5	0	.....	3	0	0
9	15	0	.....	4	5	0
8	0	0	.....	4	0	0
8	0	0	.....	5	0	0
13	0	0	.....	5	15	0
6	0	0	.....	3	0	0
6	5	0	.....	3	15	0
14	0	0	.....	8	0	0
1	18	0	.....	1	0	0
8	17	0	.....	4	5	0
15	0	0	.....	6	10	0
29	2	0	.....	11	8	0
26	6	0	.....	9	16	0
17	15	0	.....	6	10	0

These instances are given as they come. In many of them the rent has been raised, and raised more than once, and in no case, which I have given, has there been expenditure by the college, so far as I could ascertain.

In a good many instances I found that the tenants had reclaimed land from bog, and in some they had in recent years rebuilt their houses. One gentleman in the neighbourhood informed us, he believed that within the last forty years at least one-third of the land now in tillage had been reclaimed and made arable without allowance

from the landlord. He added that the land was of such a nature that it would, if neglected, speedily relapse into wildness.

A tenant some seven years ago built his house and got £40 7*s*. from the college towards the cost, of which, however, £35 only were given to him in cash, the difference being (£5 7*s*.) charged for a piece of timber. The tenant produced the stringent agreement under which this advance was made, of which I had a copy taken, by which he bound himself to repay the advance by forty half-yearly instalments of £1 12*s*. each, with the proviso that, if he failed in payment of any one instalment, the whole should forthwith be recoverable. This hardly sounds very liberal treatment on the part of a great corporation.

The man assured me that his house had cost him £120, and he added with some bitterness, "I wish I had my money clear out of the place, and I would leave it to them altogether." He complained that he had been promised the money as a gift towards building the house, but faith had not been kept with him. This was probably a misunderstanding.

Another man who had been tenant for thirty years, and whose father-in-law, through whom he got the land, had been tenant for sixty years, told me that the rent had been raised in his time from £8 to £26 10*s*. One of these rises was in 1869, when some kind of general valuation was made by valuers from Dublin, Messrs. Brassington and Gale, who in some cases reduced, but in a greater number considerably increased, the rents. The total increase was trifling.

It is significant of the relations between landlord and tenant in Ireland how these rises take place. It throws a strong light upon that cherished principle, "freedom of contract."

Later on I shall have one or two striking examples to quote on another estate. But the mode is simple; the tenants are informed that for the future their rent shall be so much. Indeed, instances were quoted to us in which the increase of rent was retrospective. So much for freedom of contract between the Irish landlord and his tenant!

Another of the tenants of the college told me that, having laid out some money in drainage, and having a wish to lay out more, he applied to Captain Needham, the agent, for an allowance, and, finally in October, 1879, memorialised the Board. The following is the answer of the Board: "The Bursar of Trinity College has received A. B.'s memorial of the 23rd inst., respecting the advance from the Board of Trinity College for the improvements of his farm. If A. B. will place in Captain Needham's hands the written agreement consenting to pay *the increased rent* at the rate of 1*s.* 7*d.* in the pound for any advance of money which he may require, the bursar will lay his application before the Board." Thus, not only would the tenant have to pay nearly 8 per cent. yearly for the money expended in the improvement of landlords' property, but, according to the existing law, expose himself to have his rent increased by his then or subsequent landlord, and increased upon the basis of the improvements which he himself had made, and for which he himself had dearly paid!

This is no fancy sketch, for be it borne in mind that when an increase of rent takes place, even where the form of a valuation is gone through, no account is taken how far the improved value may have been created by the labour and the capital of the tenant. It was so in the case of the valuation of Messrs. Brassington and Gale.

I was anxious to have some authentic information as to the more remote portions of this property, which I did not myself visit, including that at Port Magee; and a gentleman—a member of the English Bar—who knows the locality well, writing to me generally of the condition of the estate, uses this emphatic language:—

"As to the College Estate, it is simply a disgrace to the country. It would be impossible to describe the filth or misery of the dwellings. I could not find out that the agent had ever taken any trouble about them. I was told everywhere that he had never been inside the houses."

I wished also to learn something of the general habits of the neighbourhood, especially as to drink, for I was painfully struck with the fact that in the town of Cahirciveen itself there were some thirty-four public houses or more. How the magistrates have been parties to this state of things I know not. It is not merely the withdrawal of so many persons and the capital of so many persons from other industries, but it is impossible that all these public houses could pay if honest drink were supplied to the people.

The explanation given me was that the licence was generally carried on in connection with some other business, and that from Killorglin on the one side to

Waterville on the other along the coast-line, and for a great distance inland, there were no public-houses, and that they were supported in Cahirciveen by the trade done on fair and market days, when from 5000 to 10,000 people come in from the surrounding districts.

But on these days that drink is taken to excess cannot be doubted—generally bad drink, which, taken by an underfed population, tells with all the greater mischief upon them. That time and money are wasted thus, and wasted to a large extent, cannot be doubted; but I was assured that in the country districts anything like habitual drinking or tippling was unknown, and even in Cahirciveen itself it is only right to say that although I was there for three days I did not see an intoxicated person during that time.

In Cahirciveen, also, are two banks, branches of the National Bank and of the Munster Bank, and from my examination in this district I have come to the conclusion, that banking accommodation upon a pernicious system, and to a pernicious extent, has been given—principally since 1870.

The banks seem soon to have appreciated the fact that the law had then given the tenant a property which, whatever it might have been in equity, was not legally his before, in his improvements in the land, and they seem to have been willing to allow this interest of the tenant to be dealt with, to say the least, to its full extent. The mode adopted was to give loans on bills at three, six, nine or twelve months, usually for small sums; generally backed by two, three, or more of the borrower's neighbours,

whose bills he in turn was expected to back; and generally at a rate of interest from 10 per cent. upwards.

When the loss of a day upon the original transaction and upon the renewal transactions, together with the expenditure in eating and in drinking which the obliged borrower feels bound to make, are taken into account, it will be seen how speedily a debt so contracted runs up, and upon what unfavourable terms the loan is transacted. At the same time I am bound to add that, although I have heard of cases where the banks have acted with great harshness, none such came under my personal observation. They appear, speaking generally at least, to have shown a greater degree of consideration than the landlords.

Upon this estate of the college, as everywhere, large tracts of land, apparently reclaimable, were to be seen; certainly as reclaimable as the patches which the tenants had brought into some kind of cultivation, but tracts which to be profitably dealt with would require drainage on a large scale, such as could not be attempted by individual tenants, however willing they might be to make the experiment.

Many of the tenants on this property received relief in meal and in seed potatoes from the charitable funds subscribed and distributed through the agency of the Duchess of Marlborough's Committee, the Mansion House Committee, and the Committee of the Land League in Dublin.

The arrears of rent are considerable. A large number of processes were, I was informed, served upon the tenants of the college for the June Quarter Sessions at Killarney, but apparently the agent was satisfied that the people

were not able to pay, and accordingly one decree only, as I am informed, was obtained.

In connection with this matter I may add that the bailiff is paid 2s. 6d. for the service of each process, thus giving him a direct interest in making them as numerous as possible, and indeed the tenants whom I encountered seemed to regard him as a much more formidable person than the agent, Captain Needham. I am informed that the practice of the estate is to oblige the tenant to pay this 2*s.* 6*d.* charge over and above the legal costs endorsed on the writ.

I could not ascertain that the college had subscribed to the local funds for the relief of the poor, but they have within the last few weeks announced their intention of making an allowance of 20 per cent. of the rent to those who pay up to March last.

One other matter I must mention: it is a subject of bitterness at Cahirciveen. This town has now a very defective water supply; but lying at the base of a range of hills, there is ample water-shed easily available, and at the small cost of about £700, capable of supplying the town at a high pressure. The town was willing to bear one-half the interest on this expenditure of capital, but the college would not bear the remainder. The total rental of the college from the Cahirciveen property is stated to be between £4000 and £5000 per annum.

CHAPTER IV.

VALENTIA TO KENMARE.

Valentia Island owned in part by Trinity College—In part by Knight of Kerry—Tenants miserably poor—Commendable efforts by Landlord—Signs of exterior improvement in Houses—High rents—All Tenants, except about twenty, in receipt of charity from Relief Committees last winter—Fishermen relieved by grants from Canadian Fishing Fund—Humiliating to Landlords—Extent of Reclaimable Land—Route to Waterville—Painful incident on Lansdowne Estate—Widow in dread of eviction—Thinks Sheriff has come to execute ejectment decree—Her Story—Estate of Mr. Hartopp—Gratitude of his Tenants—Estate of Mr. Bland at Sneem—Tenants would have starved but for Relief Funds—Miss Hewson's Estate, formerly Mr. Mahony's—Tenant paying 350 per cent. over Government valuation.

THE portion of the Island of Valentia which is not owned by Trinity College, and that the greater part, is the property of Sir Maurice Fitzgerald, better known by his historic title of the Knight of Kerry. Of this property I desire to speak with some reserve. I have not examined it with the fulness I should desire before pronouncing a decided opinion upon it. It has but recently descended to its present owner, and of the management and action of his late father in relation to his tenants I would for the present prefer not to speak fully.

Generally, however, it may be said that this estate presents the same features as that of Trinity College.

With few exceptions the tenants are miserably poor, and although commendable efforts seem to have been made by the late Knight of Kerry to improve their dwellings, his efforts have not always been successful. Here and there may be observed a marked improvement exteriorly, but I did not find a corresponding increase of comfort within.

Speaking generally also, the rents are largely in excess of Griffith's valuation, and I should think little, if anything, short of double that valuation. The late Knight certainly borrowed from the Board of Works with a view to the improvement of his property, but the tenants have had to pay where they availed themselves of these funds, and they have had to pay in the shape of a high and, as they conceive, a permanent increase in their rents.

I hope and believe that there is some misapprehension in the minds of the Kerry tenants on this subject, and that the landlords are not doing in Ireland, what undoubtedly was done by a few English landlords in the cotton famine here, namely, making a profit from their tenants out of the public funds lent for land improvement.

When told the interest they are paying, and which ought to represent the repayment of principal and interest in thirty-five years in some cases, and in twenty-two years in others—and does so represent it as between the Board of Works and the landlord—I have asked, "How long is it to last?" The answer has always been in effect the same. One man said, "I am to pay as long as water runs." Another man said, "Oh, it is just as the landlord fixes it, but I suppose it will go on always with the rent."

Another man answered, "Always, to be sure; when once it goes on to the rent, it never comes off again." I am not speaking here only of the Valentia tenants. This language is significant of the helplessness of the tenants to bargain for themselves.

About £1200 passed through the hands of the Relief Committee in Valentia, which sum went to assist the tenants of Trinity College and of the Knight of Kerry, and I am informed that there were not twenty of these tenants who did not receive relief.

So far as I could learn the landlords contributed nothing to the charitable funds, but the Knight of Kerry did supply seed potatoes to some of his tenants, in some instances at market price, and in other cases below market price.

I was assured that many of the tenants must have starved but for this charitable relief, and yet these creatures are making a wonderful struggle for existence and a wonderful effort to pay their rent. Some of them have shares in seine nets, but these nets had not of late years been kept up efficiently. Last year and this, however, assistance was given them from the Canadian Fishing Fund. It cannot but be humiliating to a landlord, not alone to have his tenants fed by the hands of strangers, but to have one branch of their industry upheld by the contributions of charity.

I was satisfied that, with rare exceptions, there was no habitual drinking on the island. One thing I must mention. Everywhere there was great bitterness at certain exactions, in addition to their rent, which formed

an increase to the burdens, already sufficiently great, on their generally miserable holdings. These were, first, the charge for grubbing stuff from the hillsides—gorse, furze, and matter of that kind—1*s.* for as much as one man can carry on his back, and 2*s.* 6*d.* for access to the shore for sand, and 2*s.* 6*d.* for seaweed. All these charges are of recent growth.

The rents had been raised of late years, principally upon changes of tenancy. Meanwhile, so far as I could learn, no improvements have been made by the landlord, at his own cost, and it was the unanimous testimony of all from whom I enquired upon the subject that the reclaimed portion of the island was the work of the existing tenants and their predecessors. The late and the present Knight of Kerry have given considerable employment upon the island.

I ought to add that the Knight seems personally popular. Of him sanguine expectations are formed. Certainly his is not a thriving tenantry, or such as a landlord can look upon with pride or satisfaction. Here, too, as elsewhere, are lying unreclaimed large quantities of land apparently of the same quality, and in great part similarly situated with that which has already been brought into cultivation.

The establishment of the telegraph station there has tended to improve the condition of the island.

Following the coast line from Cahirciveen, leaving Port Magee on the right and passing along the head of Ballinskelligs Bay, we reached Spunkane, where we again came in contact with a portion of the Lansdowne estates.

Here two incidents occurred which it is right to mention. The first was of a gratifying kind. It was the testimony of a tenant on the estate in favour of its management. His commendation was certainly not very strong, but it was remarkable, inasmuch as it was the only instance out of some hundreds of inquiries in which the Lansdowne management was spoken of even with qualified praise. He said that if a man was sober and industrious he could manage very well to live on the Lansdowne property.

I was struck with the fact that he seemed not unwilling to abuse some of his neighbours, and I was anxious to learn how far the testimony was reliable, and from two independent sources I have received information to the same effect—that he is a special pet and protégé of the Lansdowne bailiff at Waterville, and that he had shown some anxiety to "grab up," as the phrase was, the land from which his less favoured neighbours had been ejected.

The other incident was of a painful description. It was the case of a widow, whose name I forbear to mention. It appears that her husband held first one small farm, and afterwards another, and that, after his acquirement of the second farm, a joint receipt was given for both holdings by the agent.

At his death one of the farms was taken over by his son, the widow continuing to hold the other. The rent fell in arrear in the late distress, and the son was unable to pay his share of the rent, while the agent refused to accept the widow's portion on the ground that the two farms, although

nearly half a mile distant from each other, formed in the estate books only one holding. The result was that a decree of ejectment had been obtained against both widow and son, and it was feared that the sheriff might come to execute it at any moment. The son's story, as told by himself, was as follows:—

"I am about thirty-two years of age. My rent is £14 5*s*., my valuation £7 15*s*. This land is in my possession for the last eighteen years. My father had the land before me. He was about eighteen years tenant. He used to pay £10 8*s*. a year rent; he bought the land from the former tenant. He gave £20 in hand, and paid Lord Lansdowne three gales of rent that were due. In addition, Lord Lansdowne added 15 per cent. to the rent. In the year 1875 the rent was again raised 5*s*. in the pound. I was served with a process in June. I only owed one year, which was due in May. I had £9 or £10, but could not make up any more. I made up that by selling a cow. I am afraid, unless some friend lends me the remainder, I will not be able to make up my rent. My mother pays £7 15*s*., and her valuation is £5. The agent would give me no draining work to do because I was served with the process. If I got the drainage work I would have been able to make up my rent. I asked Taylor—the bailiff in Waterville—for it, but he refused. My mother was served with a writ also.

I never saw Trench, the agent, in my life, nor Lord Lansdowne. When I was served with the process I offered half the rent and £1 15*s*. costs, and it would not be taken from me. We always paid our rent punctually before this. For the last two years we could not get anything. Our credit was cried down. No one came down to see the land before the rises in the rent were made. A decree has been obtained against both me and my mother, and I do not know on what day the sheriff will come

to put us out. My mother's holding is about half a mile away. I will go with you and show it to you."

This is the widow's story:—

"This cabin has been in the family for the last sixty years. My husband purchased the holding which is now occupied by my son for £20; since this the two rents have been included in the one receipt. My husband killed himself trying to improve the land. It was bad, shaky bog when he got it. It is now as dry as the road. The landlord raised the rent three times. The last rise was in 1875, when he added 5*s.* in the pound to the rent."

Note that this was a case in which the reclamation was the tenant's, the improvements the tenant's, and in which there had been no expenditure of capital by the landlord.

The son having came down to the road to point out his mother's holding we took him up in our conveyance; the result of which was that, when his mother and sisters saw him driving with us towards the widow's cabin, it flashed across their minds that we were the sheriff's party come to execute the ejectments.

Think of the import of this to these poor creatures, and, most of all, to the widowed mother, whose life had been spent—even happily it might be, with all its miserable surroundings—on this spot! It was everything to her; it was the place with which all the bright and tender recollections of her humble life were bound up.

As we approached the cabin two comely girls, the widow's daughters, came running towards us with tears streaming down their cheeks. They commenced beating their hands in solemn time, and raised that painful keening cry which the Irish so frequently resort to in

moments of exquisite sorrow. We reached the threshold. The widow stood in the middle of the cabin gazing at us with stupefied terror; she plainly believed that now at last the moment had come when the fire on her hearth was to be quenched, and she was to be left houseless and homeless. She refused to be comforted. She was incapable of understanding the assurances of her son that we were friends, and uttering a shrill cry she fell prone on the ground in a swoon which lasted several minutes. When she recovered, she told us the story which I have above given you.

Perhaps I ought not to narrate this incident. Perhaps it is only weak sentimentalism — for was not the proceeding in ejectment well within the legal rights of the landlord?

At Loher we touched upon the estate of Mr. Hartopp, an English proprietor, whose agent is Mr. Butler, himself owner of a small estate in the neighbourhood, and here I found the testimony pretty general in favour of the humane and considerate conduct of Mr. Hartopp and his agent during the recent period of distress. Not only had he not sought to evict, but he had helped his tenantry in various ways to meet the sad pressure of the time. It was with grateful emphasis that more than one of the tenants proudly said, "We have the best landlord in Kerry."

At Sneem we came upon the Bland estate. The complaint was that the rents were very high, about double, we were informed, Griffith's valuation. But otherwise the landlord seems to have been considerate, and to have done little in the way of eviction.

The arrears of rent were considerable. The testimony of one gentleman who was connected with the Bland agency was remarkable. He is a trader in the village of Sneem; about £3000 are owing to him by the tenants of the neighbourhood. He said that if the tradesmen had pressed for their money the people could not have lived through the distress; and, as it was, they could not have lived through it but for the relief funds distributed, amounting altogether to some £1800. He said the rents, which had been gradually raised since 1872, are now about double Griffith's valuation; but he added, "It is hard to blame the landlord when, if there is any land vacant, there are about forty people ready to take it." This is, I believe, only too true.

In connection with the small estate of a Miss Hewson, near Kenmare, the following information was given to us. It is instructive; it once again illustrates the helplessness of the tenants in resisting any demanded rent-increase.

The property formerly belonged to one Mahony, of Cork, who, intending to sell it, raised the rent all round. With this the poor tenants had little to say. They could but submit, and having so, by a word, as one may say, increased the apparent fee-simple value of his property, Mr. Mahony sold it to Miss Hewson. Here is the story of one of her tenants as told by himself:

"I am tenant of Miss Hewson, of Flesk, Killarney. My rent is £45 a-year; valuation £12 10*s*. I used to pay £30 a-year until three or four years ago, when Miss Hewson threatened to evict me unless I paid an increase

in my rent of 50 per cent. I had to pay and am still paying the 50 per cent. Miss Hewson gave me no abatement whatever in the hard times. Mr. Mahony, of Cork, was the previous owner of the land. Mahony, immediately before he sold the land to Miss Hewson, raised the rent in order that he might get a better price for the land when selling. My father was in possession of the land before me. He had more land than I now have. He divided the land among his three sons. The land my father had he only paid £30 a-year for. Miss Hewson built a house at a cost of about £50 or £60, and has charged me £3 10*s.* a-year for it."

We are not concerned with the natural beauty of the route of which I have been speaking, but one could not fail to be struck with the rude contrast between the charms which Nature has lavished upon the place and the abject miserable condition of the great mass of the creatures who toiled for a wretched living upon it.

Here, as elsewhere, were to be seen profitless tracts of ground over which strong arms, directed by strong hearts, with a consciousness of security, could speedily push fertility. Kenmare certainly presents an agreeable change. Evidence of much want there undoubtedly is, even here. But the houses are better and more cleanly, and although local industries are few, the appearance of the town is almost thriving.

CHAPTER V.

THE LANSDOWNE ESTATE AT KENMARE.

Appearance of the Tenants' Houses better—History of Estate interesting—Conflicting accounts as to Landlord—Estate managed by Mr. Townsend Trench—Denials by him of the existence of distress on the Estate—Statement of the Nun of Kenmare—£15,000 collected by her for relief of distress—Lord Lansdowne's Tenants extensively relieved out of these Funds, and Clothes supplied to cover the Children attending the National Schools on his Estate—Piece of Bacon hanging up in a Tenant's house—Explanation of this phenomenon: Tenant an ex-policeman, and had a pension of £46 a-year.

As you drive along the main roads of the Lansdowne property, in the neighbourhood of Kenmare, the appearance of the dwellings presents a marked improvement upon those on other estates in the country—for example, of Lord Ventry or Lord Bantry.

The *Standard* newspaper, by its Commissioner, writing in 1879, however, describes these houses as "whited sepulchres." I will not endorse the strength of this language; but I do say that, in point of the social comfort of their lives, there is little, if any, difference between the state of the Lansdowne tenants and the others whom I visited.

For many reasons I was anxious to see Lord Lansdowne's tenantry. I wanted to see how a nobleman with

ample means and credited with large views regarded his tenantry, and how his tenantry regarded him. I hoped to find proof that a high-minded landlord could, even under and in spite of the existing system, elevate his tenantry morally and socially.

I had noticed, too, accounts widely differing in the public press of the management of this estate. In the *Daily Telegraph*, for instance, on the occasion of his leaving the Government, it was written:—

"In Lord Lansdowne the Ministry have lost a statesman of promise, whose secession is all the more important on account of its cause. For generations the Lansdowne estates have had a high fame as models of management, the liberality and justice of the noble owners having succeeded in producing what may be called English comfort on Irish soil."

In the Dublin *Freeman's Journal*, on the other hand, of about the same date, I read:—

"To ordinary Englishmen the Marquis of Lansdowne only presents the spectacle of a great Whig magnate who has deserted his party. Irishmen better understand the motives of a man who has inherited the traditions of the most cruelly managed estate in all this afflicted land."

I cannot adopt either of these statements; but I must say that I failed to see any signs of "English comfort," and, so far as the sentiment of the district is concerned, the language of the Irish organ more closely approximates to the truth.

For other reasons this estate was interesting. Its history is typical of many estates in Ireland. In Sep-

tember, 1654, Dr. Petty came to Ireland as Physician-General to the English army. Until June, 1659, his salary was 20*s.* a-day, and he had private practice. Within a few years he was the owner of above 50,000 acres in Kerry, and, as he states in his will (a remarkable and interesting document), he had in Ireland, "without the county of Kerry, in land, reversions, and remainders, about £3100 more." In the same document he quaintly adds that he dies "in the practice of such religious worship as I find established by the law of my country." He was a strong-minded able man—the author, amongst others, of the 'History of the Down Survey' and of the 'Political Anatomy.' This was the founder of the Lansdowne Estates.

The management of these large estates is in the hands of Mr. Townsend Trench, son of the late Mr. W. Steuart Trench, to whom he succeeded. It is difficult to say how far the judgment of the community over whom their powers as land agents were and are exercised is just or reliable.

Unquestionably father and son were spoken of almost universally with fear and dislike—to use no stronger language. It was painful to notice the mortal dread of agent and bailiff in which many of these tenants live. I noticed nothing like it elsewhere in Kerry. Their conduct may be misjudged, but assuredly no kindly recollection of the late Mr. Trench seems to survive, and no kindly feeling towards his son, the present agent, exists.

Lord Lansdowne, although he resides a portion of the year at Derreen, near Kenmare, does not seem to be

generally known to his tenants. Those on the Iveragh portion of his property have hardly seen him since his visit there on the occasion of his attaining his majority. More than once, when—some harsh case being cited to me—I suggested to the tenants to appeal to Lord Lansdowne, the answer was always the same, "Oh, he leaves it all to the agent," or, "It's no use—it all rests with Trench."

Even plans conceived—and, I believe, kindly conceived—by landlord or agent—of emigration, for instance—are looked upon with distrust. Nor is this remarkable, for in the years of the Great Famine this estate was not only the scene of some of the most awful miseries of that awful time, but it was also the place from which a large emigration took place under the auspices of the late Mr. Trench which has left to this day bitter memories behind it.

In his so-called 'Realities of Irish Life,' Mr. Steuart Trench describes, in a painfully graphic way, the state of things in Kenmare Union. He writes:—

"At least 5000 people must have died of starvation within the Union of Kenmare. They died on the roads, and they died in the fields; they died on the mountains, and they died in the glens; they died at the relief works, and they died in their houses. So that whole streets or villages were left almost without an inhabitant, and at last some few, despairing of help from the country, crawled into the town, and died at the doors of the residents, and outside the Union walls."

It was at this time that the author, then succeeding to

the management of these estates, set on foot his scheme of emigration; and, as he pithily puts it—

"In little more than a year 3500 paupers had left Kenmare for America, all free emigrants, without any ejectments having to be brought against them to enforce it, or the slightest pressure put upon them to go. Matters now began to right themselves. Only some fifty or sixty paupers remained in the House, chargeable to the property of which I had the care, and Lord Lansdowne's estates at length breathed freely."

He adds, in another place, that the rate of transportation of these emigrants amounted to a sum less than it would cost to support them in the workhouse for a single year. This I believe means, or then meant, less than £4 per human being.

That is one point of view of the question. I do not doubt that this was a scheme approved of by the then Lord Lansdowne from humane motives. But its execution seems to have been grossly faulty. Its history is still told on the hillsides of Kerry, and the traditions of the place keep alive the story of the Lansdowne Ward in New York Hospital, where many of these ill-starred emigrants fell victims to disease and death.

It is curious that the present agent seems to have denied strenuously the existence of distress on the Lansdowne estate in 1879–80, and to have refused to act upon any of the several relief committees established in the neighbourhood. To Mr. J. A. Fox, the Government inspector, to Mr. Fletcher, a member of the Duchess of Marlborough's Relief Committee, and to the Rev. Canon Bagot, representing the Mansion House Committee, he is

reported to have given emphatic denials of the existence of any distress in the district. Indeed, so far as I have been able to ascertain, the first occasion on which he admitted its existence was in April, 1880, when he applied to the Mansion House Committee for funds to promote a new emigration scheme.

I mention with pain one fact. Miss M. F. Cusack, known as the Nun of Kenmare, one of the sisters in the Convent of Poor Clares, in Kenmare (a lady not less known for her active benevolence than for her literary work), in her printed expression of thanks to America for the funds entrusted to her for relieving the distressed tenantry, says, under the date of Easter Week, 1880:

"One land agent said to me that when he saw the distress coming he told his noble master that it would be the best thing that had ever happened for the landlords—they would have their tenants at their mercy."

She adds,

"These same land agents were the principal cause of the distress being denied, for clearly if the distress were admitted, to demand rents, and rack rents, from the starving people, would have been too gross an act of inhumanity."

It can hardly be doubted to whom this language refers. I hope it may be shown to be the result of some grave misapprehension.*

This lady, by her public appeals, collected a sum of about £15,000, which was in great part expended in South Kerry. She assured me that many tenants of Lord

* This denied by Mr. Trench, see *post*, p. 163.

Lansdowne had been recipients of blankets, of meal, of seed potatoes; and that, as to three National Schools, attended principally by the children on Lord Lansdowne's estate, namely, those of Laragh, Lehud, and Copperas (one of them being situate outside the entrance-gate of Derreen House), she had to supply clothes to cover the children. She had done so, she told me, in consequence of statements made to her by the schoolmistresses, that for the sake of decency they could not otherwise allow the children to attend the schools, even if their parents were willing to permit them to do so.

A gentleman conversant with the action of the Relief Committees in the town informed us that fully half of the relief which passed through his hands had been given to Lord Lansdowne's tenants. He said:

"The people came crying to me for it; in fact, on his estate there were tenants who called on me personally between the dates of the meetings of the committee, asking me, for God's sake, to give them supplemental orders for meal."

He added that of these tenants many were living upon the produce of the seed potatoes supplied by charity. He added, further, that Lord Lansdowne had brought some forty tons of potatoes to Kenmare which had been sold by him for cash at something below the market price; that these were wholly insufficient to sow the land; and he finally added:

"My belief is, that were it not for the relief given by our committees, a great number of the Lansdowne tenants would have died."

This emphatic testimony received corroboration in several other quarters.

Compared with other estates which I visited, the rents, tested by Griffith's valuation, are not the highest. Indeed, taking some dozen cases or more, I found that the rent did not generally exceed the valuation by more than about 50 per cent.—not always so much—and yet I believe the cases to be exceedingly few in which the tenants could, out of the land, pay the existing rent if they reserved to themselves a sufficiency of food and of clothing for decent maintenance. The normal food of the tenants is as I have described it to be elsewhere.

The fact that the tenants of Lord Lansdowne in this neighbourhood have many of them (sometimes but not always), assisted by loan from the landlord, built new houses or added to their office buildings, causes the rent to approximate more closely to the valuation. This I will hereafter explain.

It is a noticeable fact that in one house, and one house only, and that on this estate, did I see a piece of bacon hanging up in the kitchen. I was struck with this, and with the otherwise greater comfort of the dwelling. I complimented the tenant upon what I presumed was his greater industry or his better management. His answer was pithy and to the point. He said, "I never could afford that, or to live anyway decent, out of the land." "How, then, do you afford it?" I asked. His answer was satisfactory. He was an ex-policeman, with a pension of some £46 a-year.

In one case, and that of a tenant who seemed much

better off than the rest, we took the trouble of ascertaining, as accurately as we could, a profit-and-loss account. This was the case of a widow, whose story illustrated another subject much complained of by the tenants—namely, rent-raisings on the occasion of the tenants marrying. Her son wanted to get married, and thereupon, with her consent, to get the land transferred into his own name. He went to the office for permission, which was promised conditionally upon the rent being raised. This he declined, and married without permission, his mother's name remaining on the books as tenant.

The rent was about £23; the valuation about £17. The holding contained grass for ten cows. He estimated the profits thus: Twelve firkins of butter, which would fetch about £40. Owing, he said, to the bareness of the land, he would not get the highest price. His profits from rearing and selling young stock would be about £6, and from the keeping of a few sheep about £5. He grew enough potatoes and oats for home consumption, none for sale. In addition to the potatoes raised he reckoned that he expended on Indian meal close on £17, on flour, clothes, groceries, and like luxuries about £25, and in wages of servants, indoor and out, about £18, showing, after the support of his family, a loss of some £30 a-year. Pressed to explain this, and how, notwithstanding, he managed to live, he said he married a fortune of £100, all of which was gone, and he owed beside in the town nearly £100 more. He said that he had been getting out of debt in the good years, but was now sunk again, and another bad year would ruin him altogether.

His family consisted of eight persons in all, including servants.

This case illustrates a state of things I fear very common in recent years, namely, where the tenant would, after the support of his family, be out of pocket even if he had the land rent-free.

CHAPTER VI.

THE LANSDOWNE ESTATE AT KENMARE—*continued.*

Rent-raising on the "silent system"—Drainage by public money—Landlord borrows money from the State repayable by terminable instalments and lends it to his Tenants—Supposed to charge them a perpetual annuity in the shape of rent increase—Lime monopoly—Lime burned by the Marquis and supplied to Tenants—While the distress greatest the price seriously raised—Printed agreement for signature of Tenants, binding them to pay 1*d.* per barrel for Lime as a permanent addition to their rents—Curious institution—The hanging year's rent—Its uses described—"Dublin writs"—Number issued—Arrears, excluding hanging gale, not great.

THERE has been no *general* rise of rents on the Kenmare Estate of Lord Lansdowne for nearly twenty years. At that time there was the serious general rise of 25 per cent., since which time the rent has in no case been lowered, though frequently, in individual cases, increased.

The increases of rent latterly are carried out by Mr. Trench upon what was significantly called by my informant the "silent system," which was explained to mean that whenever a tenancy was changed, as when a new tenant came in, or the son was substituted for the father or for the mother, the rule is that an increase then takes place. As to the amount of such increase, the tenant has little to say; it is fixed by the agent, and

generally, almost invariably, without any independent skilled re-valuation. The tenant may either agree to pay, or go.

I find that in the end of 1879 Lord Lansdowne offered to his tenants drainage work on their signing an agreement to pay a perpetual addition to their rent—1*s.* for every £1 given by him for such work, such addition to commence at the end of three years.*

In reference to this charge for the repayment of public money advanced by the State on exceptional terms for the purpose, not, I presume, of benefiting the landlords, but of aiding an impoverished country to surmount distress, it will be well shortly to recall the circumstances under which the advances for drainage work have been made to Irish landlords.

Under Acts of Parliament passed in 1847 and 1872 the Board of Works are authorised whenever called upon so to do, to assess the increase which should be added to any tenant's rent in consequence of money borrowed by the landlord from the State having been employed in draining the tenant's holding. By the 9th section of Act 43 Vict. c. 4 (which received the Royal assent on March 15th, 1880) it is provided as follows: "Provided always that in any award for increase of rent to be made by the Commissioners of Public Works (Ireland), under the said Land Improvement Act, the increase, if any, so awarded shall not exceed the yearly rent-charge payable by the owner for such loan.

* The reader is asked to suspend his judgment until Lord Lansdowne's explanation and my reply have been read.

On January 12, 1880, a public notice was issued by the Board of Works stating that drainage loans would be granted to landlords in certain distressed districts on the following terms: 1st. No interest to be charged for the first two years, and thereafter the interest to be at the rate of 1 per cent. 2nd. The time for repayment to be extended to thirty-seven years; and by the notice it is pointed out that by an annual payment of £3 8*s.* 6*d.* per cent. for thirty-five years, beginning at the expiration of two years from the date of the loan, both principal and interest would be extinguished.

In this notice it is also stated that these terms would refer to loans which had been applied for subsequent to November 22, 1879. Kenmare and Cahirciveen are mentioned as distressed districts in the schedule to this notice.

On December 27, 1879, an order was made by the Board of Works, authorising a loan of £5000 (which, although prior to the above notice, was on the above terms) to Lord Lansdowne, and on June 12, 1880, a further order for £1000 was made for him on the like terms.

Thus Lord Lansdowne obtained from the State £6000, which he will repay by a terminable assessment of £3 8*s.* 6*d.* per cent. The information which we received was that the tenants who had received part of these moneys for drainage, &c., have to pay as a permanent increase to their rent £5 per cent. after three years, and that they had signed office-agreements to that effect. I hope there is here some misapprehension.

I am not surprised that only a comparatively small number of tenants applied. Everywhere the feeling is that the rent is more than they can pay, living in the barest fashion, and they shrink from anything which will involve a permanent addition to that serious burden. Nor is this wonderful, when it is recollected that if overtaken by misfortune and so unable to pay rent, they may be ejected without one penny of compensation, or if they refused to pay an increased rent, be turned out at the will of the landlord with only the, as they conceive, inadequate protection of the Act of 1870.

Very general complaints exist as to the charges made by the estate management for lime supplied to the tenants, which for the wet and boggy land on the Kenmare Estate is an absolute necessity. The only substitute for it is fine sea-sand and seaweed, and these are not effectual.

It appears that Lord Lansdowne some years ago erected large limekiln in the town of Kenmare for the purpose of supplying the tenants, and that from that time forward they were obliged to take the lime from him. I understand that Lord Lansdowne does not admit having prohibited the tenants using their own kilns, but undoubtedly the impression that he did so prevails in Kenmare. One would have thought, indeed, that the lime so produced on a large scale would not only be better burned, but cheaper, and thus a benefit to the tenants. They do not seem to think so.

These are the facts as stated to me. From the date of the erection of Lord Lansdowne's limekiln in Kenmare, he continued until this year to supply his tenants with

lime at rates varying faom 1*s.* to 1*s.* 3*d.* per barrel. Even at these rates the sale of the lime ought to have yielded a profit. Mr. Samuel M. Hussey, Lord Kenmare's agent (a gentleman of great ability as well as great experience), told me that at Killarney Lord Kenmare expected to be able to supply lime to his tenants, without loss to himself, at 1*s.* 3*d.* per barrel, and that owing to the facility at Kenmare for water carriage of culm, or slack coal, the lime ought to be burned at a considerably lower price there than at Killarney.

In the spring of the present year (when the distress was at its height) the tenants were informed by the agent that if they required lime they would get it, on signing the following agreement, a printed copy of which is in my possession:

"I hereby agree with the Marquis of Lansdowne to pay annually, after two years, one penny per barrel, as an addition to my rent, for each and every barrel of lime that I take. And I hereby acknowledge having taken from the said Marquis barrels of lime.

(Signed) .

Witness .

Dated ."

Simultaneously with the publication of this agreement the cash price of lime was raised by the agent to 2*s.* 6*d.* a barrel.

This last statement, strongly vouched to me, I fail to understand. It seems remarkable. I ought to add Lord Lansdowne's is the only public limekiln for miles around Kenmare. When we consider that land such as that on the Kenmare estate requires lime every seven years, and

as much as sixty barrels to the acre, if properly treated, it does not seem very surprising that the tenants should look upon the above agreement, as they unquestionably do, with suspicion, and, as an ingenious device for raising their rent.

One extraordinary institution prevails on this estate, not only on the Kenmare, but also on the Cahirciveen portion of it—namely, what is called the hanging two gales, or hanging year's rent. At first I supposed that this merely meant that instead of the hanging gale, or half-year, which is common on Irish estates, carelessness or liberality had suffered this to be increased to two hanging half-years. But I found this was not so. I found it dated back to the pre-famine years, and that, while treated as non-existing so long as the tenant continued to pay the accruing gales, the hanging year was used as an engine of terrific power in the hands of the agent where the tenant fell in arrear.

It is difficult to understand this, and I was slow to believe it; but over and over again, and in all directions upon the estate, I was informed that this outlying year counted for nothing, and dated back to a time older than many of the inhabitants. They added that, although it counted for nothing so long as the accruing rent was punctually paid, it did count for much if the rent was half a year in arrear, for that then, and then only, was the dormant year brought forward as the basis on which an ejectment was founded, and by which (it is not too harsh a word to use) the screw was applied to the tardy-paying tenant.

More than one instance was cited to us of cases where an ejected tenant, whom the agent did not desire to continue on the estate, was not allowed to redeem, except upon payment of this stale demand; whilst if the tenant were not obnoxious to the agent, no such demand was made.

I confess I was incredulous for a long time, until I was informed by the Rev. Mr. M'Cutcheon, Protestant Rector of Kenmare (himself a sturdy Northern), that when he succeeded to the incumbency of Kenmare, upon paying his first gale of rent, he looked at his receipt, and, to his surprise, found that it was dated a year back. He was thus made to appear not only to be owing a year's rent, but to be paying for a period when, in fact, he was not in occupation. He complained of this, and received for his comfort the assurance of Mr. Trench that it was a mere matter of form—that it was the custom of the office.

I mentioned the circumstance first to Lord Kenmare's sub-agent, and afterwards to Mr. Hussey, and each of them laughed. The story was obviously not new to them, and Mr. Hussey significantly added that in his opinion it gave to Mr. Trench more power over the tenants than any law could give him.

On this estate, as on all others to which I have adverted, there lies in all directions land apparently capable of reclamation in the hands of those who had the will and the interest to reclaim. I was not without skilled advice on this matter; I am not speaking merely from my own rude notions of the subject.

I was surprised to find the extent to which many of

these Lansdowne tenants were indebted to the bank, and still more frequently to the shopkeepers of Kenmare.

Mr. M'Cutcheon (to whom I have already alluded) told me that if the shopkeepers had not acted with greater humanity and forbearance than the landlords, five-sixths of Lord Lansdowne's tenants would have been absolutely ruined; and indeed, to my observation, it did not seem that they were, in fact, far removed from ruin as it was.

It is significant of the want of sympathy between the landlords and their tenants that when their trials were greatest the tenants turned to the Catholic priest and to the Protestant Rector for advice and help. So far as I saw, this part of Kerry is free from at least one evil; there are, of course, religious differences, but there is no religious bickering or ill-will.

Bitter complaint was made that even in cases within the jurisdiction of the county courts writs of ejectment are issued from the superior courts—what the tenants call "Dublin writs." These not alone necessitate the employment of a Dublin solicitor, either directly or through some local solicitor, but suggest to the minds of the tenants a fearful unknown field of expensive litigation. Even the initial costs often are, in proportion to the rent demanded, enormous, and the screw is so powerful that the effort will be made to pay, even if the payer is to denude his farm of the greater part of his stock, and himself of the means of turning his holding to account.

I find that from Sept. 1, 1879, to Sept. 1, 1880, sixty superior court writs of summons in ejectment, exclusive

of Quarter Sessions processes, were issued. Of these forty were issued about September, 1879, and twenty were issued in May of the present year. I have the list before me. The former comprised rent due up to May 1 (but by the custom of the office collected in July), and the latter twenty, comprised rent up to May 1, 1880. Excepting one case the greatest amount of rent due was two years' rent, or excluding the stale or fictitious outlying year, one year's rent. In the great majority of instances three half-years' rent only were due, or, excluding the stale or fictitious year, one half-year's rent.

CHAPTER VII.

IVERAGH ESTATE OF LORD LANSDOWNE.

The Tenants have rarely seen Landlord: some never—Neither Landlord nor Agent visited the Estate during the distress—The Estate managed by Bailiffs—Rents higher than at Kenmare—Comparative Table of Rents and Government Valuation — Rents raised three times in twenty-five years—Last rise in 1875 was twenty-five per cent. all round—Story of the Tenants in their own words—The hanging year's rent used as means of extracting illegal costs—Tale of the rent-raising on the Estate succinctly told—Easy fashion in which it is accomplished—No independent valuation.

THE part of the Lansdowne estate to which I desire next to advert lies in the Iveragh Barony, some miles to the east of Cahirciveen, in the Foilmore district. This is a wild, boggy, uninviting tract of country. But even here fertility has been pushed by arduous effort, long continued, up the bleak hillsides.

The valley below discloses an enormous tract of low-lying boggy land, with the river Foil passing through it, and appearing to afford ready means for the reclamation and drainage of a large district now profitless and barren. A further portion of the estate lies beyond Cahirciveen, on the coast road to Kenmare, near Waterville. Both portions possess many characteristics in common. The houses are in appearance inferior to those on the Kenmare

portion of the property, otherwise there is, I think, little difference.

While, however, the same feeling in reference to the agency of the estate seems to exist here, I was somewhat surprised to find that a freer tone of criticism and a more independent attitude was assumed by the tenants than in the Kenmare neighbourhood. There they seemed literally afraid to call their souls their own. It is no exaggeration to say they spoke with bated breath, as if afraid agent or bailiff might hear them. Here they spoke out their complaints with greater freedom and boldness. The greater distance from the agent's eye perhaps accounted for the difference. Lord Lansdowne was unknown to them. The few who had ever seen him had done so upon the occasion of his attaining his majority. Mr. Trench had only been there once in the last five years, and then his visit had been short. Neither landlord nor agent had visited them in the time of their distress, although Canon Brosnan, the parish priest of Cahirciveen, had given timely written warning to Lord Lansdowne that the condition of his Cahirciveen tenantry was likely to be one of great suffering and privation.

Practically, the control of this part of the estate is in the hands of bailiffs, of whom the principal one lives at Waterville. I was unable to find that any considerable money had been laid out by the landlord, and, where it had been, 1*s.* in the pound had been added to the rent as a permanent increase. Some small amount of drainage work within the last few months had indeed been done with the public moneys, borrowed, I believe, on the

favourable terms of which I have already spoken. The rents here are unquestionably very high, much higher than those in the neighbourhood of Kenmare, as compared with Griffith's valuation. I append some examples:

Rent.				Valuation.			Rent.				Valuation.		
£	s.	d.		£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.		£	s.	d.
21	0	0	.....	14	0	0	18	10	0	.....	10	7	0
16	0	0	.....	9	10	0	18	6	0	.....	11	10	0
21	4	0	.....	14	11	0	14	5	0	.....	7	15	0
18	0	0	.....	10	18	0	7	15	0	.....	5	0	0
21	16	0	.....	14	1	0	14	7	0	.....	8	10	0
15	0	0	.....	8	17	0	18	0	0	.....	11	5	0
18	1	0	.....	10	10	0	14	0	0	.....	8	0	0
8	10	0	.....	4	15	0	14	7	0	.....	7	5	0

These rents have been increased three times within the last twenty-five years.

The story of these increases is a remarkable one, and to it I desire especially to ask the attention of those, whose regard for the sacred principle of freedom of contract, renders them unwilling to interfere by statute with the relations of landlord and tenant. But first I should like to tell the story of some of these tenants briefly from their own lips:

"——— I was born on the land; so was my father before me. Rent £55 6*s*; valuation £33. Rent used to be £36. It was raised twenty years ago to £44 6*s*. and it was again raised four or five years ago to £55 6*s*. I drained about twenty acres of the land without getting a penny from the landlord. It was poor barren land. I removed a lot of rocks and stones; I built out-offices myself, and did not get a penny from the landlord. I asked for, but did not get, slates or timber. There is a hanging year's rent on the estate, and no tenant on the property can trace when it began. I am forty-five years of age, and I heard

my father say that he did not remember when the hanging year's rent began.

"I was processed in November, 1879, for the rent due in May, and I had to pay, besides the rent, £2 10*s.* for costs. I wrote to Mr. Trench saying that times were very bad, and asking for some little time to pay, and his reply was, that I would have to pay it at once."

"—— Rent £16. Valuation £9 10*s.* In 1855 my rent was £11. It was then raised to £12 10*s.* Five or six years ago it was again raised to the present rent. I built a cowhouse in 1877; the landlord gave me some timber and slates. I drained about three acres of land, and reclaimed altogether about six acres of the land. Until this year I got no money for draining."

"—— Rent £21 4*s.* Valuation £14 11*s.* Tenant forty years. Rent used to be £12. The first rise was about twenty-five years ago, 3*s.* in the pound. Three years afterwards it was raised 3*s.* 6*d.* in the pound more, and the last time, five years ago, it was raised 3*s.* in the pound."

"—— Rent £16. Valuation £10 18*s.* Tenant twenty-five years. Rent then £10. Raised then 3*s.* in the pound. Three years after raised 3*s.* 6*d.* in the pound, and five or six years ago 5*s.* in the pound. The last 5*s.* was reduced to 3*s.*, as I could not pay the extra 5*s.*

"Most of my land was all barren ground, but I drained it, built on it, and removed large rocks and stones from my lands, and made fences, but I got no assistance. Till this year I had no drainage money. I had to sign an agreement in the presence of Tay, the bailiff, to pay, in addition to my rent, 1*s.* in the pound, or more if it was wanted, for every pound expended in draining my holding. There was some drainage done on my farm about twelve years ago, and I was paid ninepence a perch, which is about half the cost, the other half I had to bear myself. It was since this that the last addition to my rent was made."

"—— Rent £21 16*s*. Valuation £14 1*s*. Forty-eight years of age, and twenty years a tenant. (Describes rises of rent as previous tenants had done.) I drained a deal of the land myself."

"—— Rent £15. Valuation £8 7*s*. I am eleven years in occupation; father and grandfather there before me. I drained two acres at my own expense. I was processed for the November rent last May. I had to pay it and £1 5*s*. costs. I was sick at the time, and my father-in-law had to pay my rent for me. My whole family was also sick at the time.

"I built a house two years ago, and got no allowance for it from the landlord. In the June Sessions there were about fifty processes by Lord Lansdowne on his Iveragh estate, where there are about 160 tenants altogether."

"—— Rent £18 1*s*. Valuation £10 10*s*. Same raisings of rent as other tenants. I drained five or six acres, made a road to my house, and removed a good deal of stones and rocks from my lands. The young men and young women are leaving the parish for America. I am sure near 100 have left this year. I would go if I could sell my interest in my farm."

"—— Rent £8 10*s*. Valuation £4 15*s*. Rent eleven years ago £6 16*s*. My father drained the land; it was all swamp and bog. I built a house, and get no allowance."

"—— Rent £18 10*s*. Valuation £10 7*s*. I was evicted May 27, 1880. The ejectment was served in October, 1879. I owed then three half-years' rent, besides the hanging year. I was put back as caretaker. Since Lord Lansdowne attained his majority he has not been seen on the estate except once. The people are afraid to do anything. They are afraid their rent will be raised."

"—— Aged 78, son 32, farmer tenant fifty years. Six acres grass, rent at first £8 10*s*. Till this year nothing for drainage. First rise 3*s*. in the pound, about 1858; second, 3*s*. 6*d*. in the pound, 1862; third rise, 5*s*. in the pound, 1875. Present rent £17 10*s*. Valuation £8 10*s*.

Have done about £30 worth of drainage, and have been paid £16 up to this time. Five per cent. is to be added to the rent. Question, 'Is that to be for ever?' Answer, 'Oh! as long as water flows.' Son built a house in 1857. Cost about £25. Asked for timber, got no answer. Reclaimed about 4 acres, and drained them. Two brothers in America and three sisters. Got some help from them. Could not have stood up but for this help, and besides I married a fortune, £60. Question, 'On what do you live?' Answer, 'We live on potatoes and Indian meal, with sour milk. We cannot afford to eat butter.

We cannot eat meat more than once in the year, about Christmas, and not always that same, and before now (this was spoken quite seriously) a piece of an old goat from the mountain side was all we had in that way. Trench has given no abatement in the rent.'"

"—— Aged 40. Succeeded my father-in-law about eighteen years ago. Same rises of rent as last tenant. Rent £18. Valuation £11 5*s*. Drained about £26 worth this year. Received £14. Have to pay 1*s*. in the pound each year on the rent. Question, 'How long is that to go on?' Answer, 'Oh! for ever. It all lies with the landlord; that is what we are told. It is easy to raise the rent, but it never falls again.'

"I made a road, and was promised an allowance for it. The driver (*i.e.* bailiff) put 5*s*. a perch value on it, but I was not allowed 2*s*., and had to go to Kenmare, walking there and back, and lost two days over it. I owe no rent till next November. Question, 'But is there not a hanging year?' Answer, 'Oh, aye, but that is nothing, so long as I can keep going. If I could not keep going it is then it would come against me.'"

"—— I succeeded my father-in-law, but I paid about £80 for the land when I came in. My rent was £12 17*s*. It is now £14 17*s*. Valuation £7 5*s*. I am also charged 5*s*. for an outrun on the mountain, which I do not want, but I have to pay all the same. I made a road across

my land and fenced it. I also built a cowhouse, and got no allowance. Question, 'But has the landlord done nothing for you?' Answer, 'Oh, divil the thing but draw his rent and raise it! I owe no rent till November.' Question, 'But how about the hanging year?' Answer, 'Sure, that is beyond the memory of any man; that goes for nothing, so long as I can keep my head up.' Question, 'But when you came in was it due?' Answer, 'Oh, not at all; but my receipt was dated back.'"

The following case illustrates the dealing in reference to the stale hanging year:

"—— Rent £18 6*s*. Valuation £11 10*s*. The farm is in my mother's name. In the early part of December 1879, she owed the hanging year up to May, 1879, and the half-year to November, 1879. On December 18, 1879, a civil bill ejectment was issued against her for this rent. A notice was printed on the back of it that if the amount was paid, with 10*s*. costs, within ten days, all proceedings would be stayed. Within ten days the half-year's rent—that is, all that was due excluding the old hanging year—was sent to Trench. His answer was:

'Kenmare, Dec. 27, 1879.

"'If you send me the full rent named in the ejectment and costs I will take it. If you only pay up to November, 1878, you must send the balance of costs, £1 5*s*. 8*d*. Meanwhile, I return your letter and insufficient draft.—I am, &c.,

"'TOWNSEND TRENCH.'"

Now, this money was tendered, as the dates show, within ten days, during which the costs are by law limited to 10*s*., and yet Mr. Trench seems to make use of this claim for the dormant year's rent as the ground for demanding a wholly illegal sum for costs. At last the tenants went to Kenmare to endeavour to obtain some

leniency, and ultimately had to pay the half-year's rent of £9 3*s.*, and for costs £2 10*s.* 3*d.* The following is, succinctly told, the history of these successive rises of rent, by one who has good reason to know the story well:

"The late Mr. William Steuart Trench, the father of the present agent, Mr. Townsend Trench, succeeded to the management of the Lansdowne estate in Kerry in 1849–50. When he came to Kerry he found the tenantry in general in poverty, and their rents excessive. He recommended Lord Lansdowne to set on foot a large scheme of emigration, and let the lands anew to the tenantry at the Government valuation. This suggestion was acceded to by the then Lord Lansdowne, and the rent was then fixed at Griffith's valuation, with the addition of 3*s.* in the pound —that is, 15 per cent. added to cover half poor-rates, and, to use Mr. Trench's own words on the occasion, 'the cost of collection of the rent and incidental expenses.'" The rent remained fixed as above for about three years, when some weeks before gale day the bailiff went abroad among the tenantry, warning them to take to the office more money for rent, as a rise was decided upon at head-quarters. This order had, of course, to be complied with, and the general rise took place, varying in some cases from 4*s.* to 5*s.* in the pound. This occurred, I believe, in 1858, with a verbal promise to the tenantry that no further rise should be put on. Eight years more passed away, and there came an improvement in the general condition of the people, and with it came the bailiff's warning to the tenantry to take more money to the office, as there was another rise of rent, the rise this time varying from 4*s.* to 5*s.* in the pound. Things then went on in this way up to 1874, when the final and crushing blow was dealt to the unfortunate tenants, in the shape of a fourth rise of 5*s.* in the pound, and all this within the space of twenty-five years. This last rise of rent was not, I believe, imposed

on the tenantry in the Kenmare district, where the bulk of the Lansdowne estate is situate. The serfs in this (Cahirciveen) part of the property were frightened into compliance by the threat that Lord Lansdowne would sell that part of his property if they refused to pay the rise. The people had so much experience of the hardships and horrors experienced by their neighbours at the hands of 'gombeens,' or small land speculators, that they were left no option but that of saying, 'For God's sake don't sell the property. Save us from those infamous land-sharks, land speculators, and we will strive to pay the increase, although we have to keep our families and ourselves in poverty and rags.' Now, with this last unhappy rise of rent came the first of a succession of bad years, bad in every way for the farmer. In 1876 the people had to sell their cattle earlier than usual. In 1877 they had not many to spare for sale. In 1878 in many cases they had no cattle at all, and in 1879 many had to run away owing debt alike to the bank, the shopkeeper, and the landlord."

It is worth pondering on this story. See the easy fashion in which the rise of rent is accomplished. No independent valuation, no mutual negotiation. The mandate of the agent goes forth. Some may grumble, even grumble in a loud voice, but it is useless. They are practically without alternative, they must submit.

A fact to my mind positively shocking was told to me by a gentleman, in every way reliable, in reference to this last rise. On that occasion, when Mr. Trench had issued his commands to his bailiffs, and had condescended to notify the rise to some of the tenants, he said to my informant, "I have done two good days' work. I have put £10,000 in Lord Lansdowne's pocket." In other words, he had additionally taxed the energies and the industry of

Lord Lansdowne's Iveragh tenants to the tune of £500 a year, which, capitalized at twenty years' purchase, amounted to £10,000! Once more, I ask, is it remarkable that in Ireland cultivation is backward, that poverty abounds, that discontent is widespread, that social progress is slow, that man so little responds to the efforts of Nature for his advantage, that, in conditions like these, thrift and industry do not flourish?

CHAPTER VIII.

SOME GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS.

Government or Griffith's Valuation — Generally its character and incidence—Complaints received that pictures of landlordism given are commonplace—More startling stories suggested—Testimony of a member of the English Bar as to the Lansdowne Estate in Iveragh —Unquestionably grievous faults in Tenants themselves—But is it not the fault of the system?—Mill's opinion—Dangerous topics in Tenants' mouths—Tipperary remedies—Effect of correspondence with and visits from America—Healthy discontent—Uncertainty as to rent and possession paralyses industry and spreads discontent—Sir Richard Grenville wrote to the English Minister to that effect three hundred years ago.

In answer to many inquiries addressed to me I wish to make a short reference to Griffith's or Government valuation. I have referred to it in connection with existing rents because it is the only standard of comparison available. But I by no means desire to represent it as necessarily a fair rent-test.

The original valuations were made under the direction of Sir Richard Griffith mainly by persons who had been engaged in valuing for estate purposes, and there is little doubt that so made they approximated closely to the then current rents. Indeed, Sir Richard Griffith put his valuation as about equal to the letting values as claimed on large estates, but about 25 per cent. below those demanded from tenants on small properties.

I observe that the late Mr. Steuart Trench, before a Parliamentary Committee in 1867, says it would then be a fair rule with regard to most of the ordinary lands in Ireland to add about 30 per cent. to the Government valuation to get at the actual value of the land. He adds that as to good land the difference would be greater. I need hardly mention that in Kerry the land is, generally speaking, very poor. Indeed, from the information before me, I doubt whether, having regard to the rise in produce-price on the one hand, and in production-cost on the other, such land is now worth as much as in 1867.

I have recently been informed, by a member of the Duke of Richmond's Commission, of cases within his knowledge, where the Griffith valuation would be more than a fair rent. It is noteworthy that for the purposes of succession duty the Government add one-third to the Griffith or Government valuation. Where rents are spoken of as high in Ireland it may generally be assumed that they are about 50 per cent. or more above the valuation. But it by no means follows that they may not be very high rents, although not up to that figure. The instances I have given show rents far above that margin.

Further, I think it proper to add that to apply the Government valuation indiscriminately in all cases as an absolute test of the fair rent cannot be sound or fair, since, apart from the considerations adverted to above, to do so would be to include cases in which the landlord might have largely increased the letting value of his land by improvements which he had at his own cost effected.

On the other hand it is to be remembered that the letting value now, includes the tenants' improvements (as, indeed, the original valuation did), to which, in a great majority of instances, the landlord has contributed nothing. Thus it happens that the improving tenant, who has raised the value of his farm above the Griffith valuation, is taxed by increased rent for his own improvements, while his non-improving neighbour remains at the lower rent.

During this correspondence I have received many letters, Irish and English, complaining that my pictures of landlordism are dull in colour. I am told by the writers that I have set forth grievances of, after all, a very commonplace kind. They complain that I might in other parts of Ireland have found subjects for much more striking illustrations of the misdeeds of Irish landlordism, and, with regard to the estates which I have been noticing, I am told I have not, even there, made the most of my subject.

Many instances are narrated to me showing cases of individual hardship and oppression stronger than those which I have given. Amongst others I am reminded of the story of the boy who died a victim to the iron office-rules of one estate, which forbade the harbouring of any member of an evicted household.

I know this sad story well, but it is an old one, and I think in this regard the office-rules have of late years been relaxed. I am told, too, of recent instances of despotic rule, as where, for such offences as the cutting of branches of trees, or a tree itself, upon a farm by the

tenant, the penalty has been eviction, and that, in such cases, to procure re-possession, the tenant has had to submit to the loss of part of his farm, or to pay an increased rent.

Those who write to me in this spirit mistake wholly the purpose of these letters. It is not my object to paint landlordism in the blackest colours, much less to attack individual landlords. My purpose is to present a fair, although probably a commonplace, picture of the condition of things produced by the existing land system, even on what are called, well-managed estates. I desire to show the outcome of that system even where the illustrations are not marked by gross cupidity or gross inhumanity.

I think of none of the estates to which I have adverted would the landlord stand high in the category of bad landlords, as understood in Ireland. In Lord Lansdowne's case, for instance, I cannot doubt he means to do his duty according to his views of that duty. How far he is accountable for the existing system of management of his property I know not.

But if on estates of such persons you find the condition of things which I have described, then, I say, the more utter must be the condemnation of that system, and the stronger the necessity for its radical alteration. Say what one will, the management is a despotism of a bad kind, singularly injurious to the advancement of those subject to it.

I conclude this part of my subject by giving the views formed of the Lansdowne estate in Iveragh by the member of the English bar to whom I have once before

alluded in these letters. He has lived much amongst these people, and has found himself attracted towards them. He says, speaking of the Lansdowne property in the neighbourhood of Cahirciveen :—

"The improvements have been effected by the tenants. Until this year, when some of them got some drainage work, they have had no assistance from the landlord. Many of the houses *look* well, especially those near the roads.

"Inside they are no whit better than those on the Trinity College Estate—nothing but squalor and misery. The people live as poorly as possible, rarely, if ever, tasting meat. Their condition is as poor and wretched as can well be imagined, even by an Irishman. They rarely or never see the agent, Townsend Trench—they are entirely under the control of an under-agent, of whom the people do not speak well."

My friend then uses some strong language in reference to this gentleman, which I pass by. He proceeds:

"As to the rent, I think that in good years they might *exist* and pay the present rents (but certainly no more than exist), unless they were rash enough to improve their farms, in which case, if we may judge from the past, they would have their rents raised."

(The italics are my friend's.)

Let it not be supposed that I desire to represent the tenants as blameless. Far from it; their faults are, in my judgment, in many cases many and serious. But they are, in the main, faults attributable to the system under which they live. If they are not altogether as thrifty and industrious as they might be, it is because they have

little motive to be so. The very want of tidiness in domestic habits, is largely due to the low social state which, for generations, has marked their lives, and from which there is, even now, so little outlook afforded them of hope or improvement.

It is, as Mill well said, a bitter satire to impute the backwardness of Irish industry and the want of energy in the Irish people in improving their condition to a peculiar indolence and recklessness in the Celtic race. It is indeed the most vulgar mode of escaping from the consideration of the effect of moral and social influences on the human mind to attribute the diversities of conduct and character to inherent natural differences. "What race," he exclaims, "would not be indolent and *insouciant* when things are so arranged that they derive no advantage from forethought or from exertion."

Of the Irish system it may, as a whole, be truly said that it seems to have been contrived, as if by malevolent genius, to develop the worst qualities in the national character, and to repress the best—contrived to encourage idleness, thriftlessness, insincerity, and untruthfulness. To me the wonder is, not that the faults of the Irish people exist as they are, but that they have managed to retain so much that is estimable, so much that is kindly in their nature, so much befitting the natural dignity of men.

When in conversation I have pointed out the tumble-down condition of the house, or the weedy field, or the broken fences, the setting of all of which in decent order would not involve much outlay in money or in labour, I have remonstrated, the tenor of the answer has generally

been the same: "Oh, it will last my time, it will do very well for me;" and when, at times, I have turned to the son standing by, he has said, "Troth, and it's not here I'd be if I could get the money to take me to America. Sure there is no heart in us to do anything in this country."

Dangerous topics, too, will crop up in conversation if the tenant can be induced to speak to you in confidence. It is well that the English public should know these things. It is idle to ignore what is passing in the minds of the people. It is indeed a dangerous thing to society where you find the lower classes expressing distrust of Parliament to help them, and looking to other agencies than the law to protect them.

At Cahirciveen I had a remarkable conversation with a man some fifty years of age, and apparently peaceable and decent. After being informed of my object in visiting the place, he said he had heard that Government was going to try and do something for them, and he added, "I believe Mr. Gladstone is a very good man; but what can he do against a whole House full of landlords? No, sir, the Tipperary boys did more for themselves in a very short time than any Government has done in my time." I well guessed what he meant, but affected not to understand. "Oh, indeed, you know well enough, sir, what I mean. When I was a boy Tipperary had the worst name for landlords in all Ireland, and some of them got badly hurt. God help them; and now they tell me there is no better landlords in Ireland than there."

At times I saw signs of an awakening amongst the

people to a higher sense of what is due to themselves. Their correspondence with their friends in America and the visits of these friends more than any other cause seemed to account for this. It helps to make them feel that their condition is not what it ought to be. I regard this as a healthy discontent. It seems to show that they would respond to efforts of the Legislature to improve their condition.

I nowhere came upon any evidence of an expectation, or even desire, that any change was to be wrought by violent or unjust means. Their highest aspiration seemed to be for security. When asked were they willing to pay to get security, the answer was, "anything that was fair." When asked what they could do for themselves, if they were helped to purchase their holdings, the answer was, "I would slave for it," and many added that friends in America would help them. One man quaintly remarked, when asked how he would be better off if the place was his own. "Sure, wouldn't the days be twice as long, and the nights twice as short, if the place was my own to work on."

It is in truth this uncertainty as to possession, this enforced sowing the seed without the security that you shall reap, which paralyses industry and spreads discontent throughout the land.

To-day it may be written, as it was written in 1588 by Sir Richard Grenville, writing from this very county of Kerry to the English minister of the day:

"Inconveniences grow, by the uncertain course that the lords and captains hold in letting their lands to their

tenants, who hold the same not above four years, and so wander from one place to another, which course being redressed, and they commanded to sell their lands as the undertakers must do, would do much good to breed civility generally in the country. For whereas, now the poor man is never certain to enjoy the fruits of his own labour, and knoweth not, in certainty, what his lord will have of him. For fear he must depend on him and follow all his actions, be they good or bad, whereas otherwise, if the poor tenant held his land by lease for his life or for twenty-one years at a certain rent, then were he sure of his charge, and that the overplus were his own, so would he depend on her Majesty and her laws to be defended against the oppressions which now too commonly every lord useth."

Is it creditable to English statesmanship that this plaint, uttered three hundred years ago, should seem almost as if written for to-day?

CHAPTER IX.

WHY EXCEPTIONAL LEGISLATION IS NEEDED FOR IRELAND.

English Land System not good, but Land in England a matter of secondary consideration—Liberality of English Landlords—Recent illustration—Effect of public opinion in England—No public opinion controlling Landlords in Ireland—The exceptional condition of things in Ireland traced to (1) Legislation directed to hindering Irish commerce and manufactures (2) Penal Laws which divorced the majority of the people from the land, and (3) Confiscations—Effect of these continuing to this day—Until years within living memory government of Ireland on principle of strengthening the small Land-owning class as if a garrison in a hostile country—Try Legislation in the interests of the people.

I NOW proceed to point out why, in my opinion, exceptional legislation is needed for Ireland. The question is frequently put thus: "The land-law in Ireland is at least as favourable to the tenant as in England. The English law serves in England; why does not the same, or a more favourable law, serve in Ireland?"

The answer is to be found in the exceptional condition of things in Ireland, and that, in its turn, cannot be fully understood or appreciated without tracing the causes which have led to it, and noting the manner in which those causes have operated.

I would begin, however, by saying that I do not admit the land laws or system of England to be good. I think

if there were a serious interruption of long duration in the manufacturing, mining, and commercial enterprise of the country, they would be unequal to bearing the strain which would come upon them.

In other words, these great fields of investment and enterprise have made the land, in England, a matter of secondary consideration. In Ireland it represents the staple—almost the only industry of the country. Theoretically open to grave objection, English Land Laws have been found in practice to answer in the main the needs of the time, because English landlords have, speaking generally, in their dealing with their tenants, shown a marked degree of liberality. They have often stopped far short, particularly in times of difficulty, of insistance upon their full legal rights.

Their conduct in the late years of agricultural depression is a strong illustration of this. They voluntarily reduced rents. In Ireland, on the contrary, there was no such voluntary movement. It is a regrettable fact that the first movement towards reduction of rents followed after, and is regarded by the people as the consequence of, the land agitation in the country.

In England, too, a strong, healthy, public opinion, controlling the exercise of exact legal rights, and softening down and modifying them, has existed. This is a factor of safety almost unknown in Ireland. It is but too true that public opinion in Ireland has little weight with Irish landlords. I have been, more than once, struck with the fact that often they do not even strive to conciliate public opinion by explaining their

conduct when impugned in Ireland. But let there be the chance of complaint reaching the ear of England and you will find attempts made to prevent even a hearing. This, like other phenomena in the condition of Ireland, is to be explained only by reference to its history.

The actual conditions of the relation of landlord and tenant in England in many respects differ from those in Ireland. The Land Tenure Committee in their preliminary Report, p. 4, put this clearly. They say:

"In England the landlord generally lets to the tenant a farm in perfect working order – an agricultural machine equipped with all the requisites of production; in Ireland the tenant often acquired merely a certain area of land upon which he was required to spend the capital, if he had any, and in any case the labour, requisite to bring it into working order. Under these circumstances the uncertain tenure from year to year, and the absence of any security for the tenant's expenditure on improvements, could not have continued until the present had not many landlords abstained from taking advantage of the rights which the law allowed them."

To understand the Irish land question of to-day it is necessary to look back.

I have no desire needlessly to rake up bygone wrongs. I wish to Heaven the Irish people could forget the past! For them it is in the main a melancholy retrospect. But England ought not to forget the past—until, at least, a great act of reparation has been done.

Even amongst men of some education in England remarkable ignorance of the evil wrought in past times

by England towards Ireland prevails. There is, indeed, a vague general impression that in very remote times England, when engaged in the endeavour to conquer Ireland, was guilty of cruelties, as most conquering nations are; but those things have done very little harm, their effects have ceased to tell, and the only purpose served, by keeping alive their memory, is to irritate the temper of the Irish people, and prompt them to look back rather than look forward.

Emphatically, I say this is not so. The effects have not ceased. It is not too much to say that Ireland and Irishmen of to-day are such as English government has made them.

It is impossible to do more than glance at the main agencies employed by England which have left enduring evil marks upon Ireland. They may be reduced to three principal heads. These are: 1. The direct legislation avowedly contrived to hinder the development of Irish commerce and manufactures; 2. The penal laws, which aimed at the suppression of the religious belief of the people by preventing education amongst them, by depriving them of civil rights, and—most important of all—by divorcing them from the land; and 3. The confiscations, which affected practically the whole of Ireland and parts of Ireland more than once.

(1.) As to the commercial laws. In 1660 Ireland's proximity to America and the good quality of its natural harbours had caused a considerable Irish colonial trade to spring up, but by legislation in 1663 the importation of any European article into an English colony except from England, and in English ships built and manned

by Englishmen, was prohibited. This was capped in 1696 by an express provision that no goods of any kind should be imported direct from the colonies into Ireland. About the same period the exportation of Irish cattle was becoming a source of wealth to the country, but upon the complaint of English landowners that thereby their rents were being affected, laws were enacted in 1665 and 1680 prohibiting the importation from Ireland, not only of cattle, but also of butter and cheese.

Upon this Ireland, striving to accommodate itself to this harsh legislation, turned to extensive sheep farming. In a few years a flourishing trade in woollen manufactures existed. Again English jealousy was aroused. Export duties were imposed.

But even these failing utterly to crush the trade, the Irish were in 1699 prohibited from exporting their woollen goods to any country whatsoever. This was a sad blow. Between twenty and thirty thousand operatives had been employed in this branch of trade alone.

The linen trade had existed in some small degree as early as the fifteenth century, but by 1700 it had risen to great importance. In 1705 the Irish were first allowed to export their white and brown linen to British colonies, but they were forbidden to bring back any colonial goods in return. In this linen trade England was no competitor, but it was feared that the Irish would supersede the Dutch linen, and so cause jealousy in Holland. Accordingly attempts were made to restrict the manufacture to the coarsest kinds. But these attempts ultimately proved unavailing.

Even as to the fisheries, it is almost amusing to read read that about the beginning of the eighteenth century petitions from Folkestone and Aldborough were considered in Parliament, complaining of the injury done to the fisheries of these towns "by the Irish catching herrings at Waterford and Wexford, and sending them to the straits, thereby forestalling and ruining your petitioners' markets." There was even a party in England desirous of prohibiting all fisheries on the Irish shore except by boats built and manned by Englishmen!

(2.) The penal legislation of Elizabeth's reign adds to antagonism of race that of creed. I do not dwell on that part of the legislation which touched freedom of worship, but it is essential to notice the law affecting the status and civil rights of Catholics.

However freedom of worship had been restricted, the permanent effects on civil society would not have been great had Catholics been left free to compete with the favoured minority in the acquirement of wealth and property in land.

In the reign of William and Anne the culminating point in this atrocious legislation was reached. It is difficult even now to read it in cold blood. It is no wonder that it has burnt deeply into the memory of the Irish people. Catholics were forbidden to sit in Parliament; they were deprived of the elective suffrage, excluded from corporations, the magistracy, the bench, the bar, grand juries, vestries, and the shrievalty. They could not be solicitors, or gamekeepers, or constables. They could not carry arms, and were subject to have their houses searched at

any time; they were excluded from the army and navy; they could not possess a horse of greater value than £5, and for that sum any Protestant, on tender, could appropriate his neighbour's hunter.

Well may Mr. Lecky say that in his own country the Catholic was recognised by the law only for repression and punishment.

Education, too, was denied them. The object was to reduce them to a condition of gross ignorance. They were excluded from the university, could not keep a school, or act as usher or tutor, or send their children abroad for education; there was, in fact, no alternative between complete ignorance and an education subversive of their faith.

Restrictions were placed upon them, too, as to the carrying on of trade, as to the taking of apprentices, while, on the other hand, they were made subject to special and exceptional impositions.

But, for the point under discussion, it remains to show the most important object and effect of the penal code, namely, the exclusion of Catholics from the freehold of the soil. No Catholic could buy land or inherit it, or lease it for more than thirty-one years, and if a leaseholder increased his profits so as to exceed a certain proportion to the rent without a corresponding rent increase, his farm passed to the first Protestant discoverer. They were deprived of testamentary power, and any interests they had were divided equally on death amongst their sons, unless one became a Protestant, in which case he took all.

Rewards for abandonment of their faith were held out to the children against their father, to the wife against her husband, to the brother against his brother. Well might Edmund Burke exclaim that this was a system well adapted, admirably adjusted in all its parts, for the degradation of a nation. By the middle of the eighteenth century these laws were virtually obsolete; their breach was connived at. But it may startle some to know that, as late as 1759, a judge of the land could from the bench of justice truly say that "the laws did not suppose any such person as a papist to exist in the kingdom, nor could he breathe without the connivance of the government."

(3.) The history of the confiscations plays an almost more important part. I am not going to give a dissertation upon the early history of Irish land tenure. For my purpose it is enough to say that the superior lord or head of the clan or tribe filled a representative character. He was, in a sense, trustee for his clan, and, though his powers were great, the tribesmen or clansmen were looked upon as having special rights in the land.

From Elizabeth's reign Acts were passed by which surrenders to the Crown from the heads or chiefs of the clans were brought about, such chiefs taking re-grants from the Crown, but commonly without provision for the protection of the subrights of the cultivators, who were the clansmen or tribesmen.

In this way the cupidity of the chief was gratified at the cost of the members of the clan, whose rights were thus sacrificed. These re-grants made, it was easy in

troublous times to get up accusations against grantees, and the work of procuring confiscations was a business of profit. Here the English undertakers soon learned to turn their power to account. Sir William Herbert, writing from Kerry to Burghley (or Burleigh), in 1588, says:

"Our pretext in the enterprise of plantation was to establish in these parts piety, justice, inhabitation, and civility, with comfort and good example to the parts adjacent. Our drift now is, being here possessed of land, to extort and make the state of things turbulent, and to live by prey and by pay."

In another place, in the same year, he speaks of these undertakers "as men who measure their conscience with their commodity." They searched into the titles of men's lands for the purpose of confiscation. They had probably bribed heavily to get re-grants to themselves, and they felt justified in making the most of their bargains.

The rights of the cultivators of the soil were disregarded, and when the people, feeling the yoke, loudly uttered their complaints of insecurity and of uncertain exactions, failing redress, they broke into outrage and lawlessness. Sir Edward Denny, writing from Kerry in 1589, says:

"The inhabitants of Irish birth and nation should not be left populous, wealthy, or weaponed, till they are first brought to a knowledge of God and obedience to the laws. As no person will ever bring the Irish to God or her Majesty, justice without mercy must first tame and command them."

Does not this remind one of utterances heard of late?

Are these utterances but the echo of a cry three centuries old? Has English statemanship no better panacea now for Irish tenants than that justice without mercy must first tame and command them?

This process of confiscation went on steadily from one reign to another, until in the end there were but few parts of Ireland which escaped. I wish particularly to emphasise the point already mentioned—namely, the confiscation not only of the lord's rights as lord, but of the rights which had been acquired under the lord. This is all-important on the point we are considering.

Let me illustrate what I mean. Let us suppose it possible that, say, the Duke of Westminster's estates were confiscated to the Crown. This would indeed be hard on the Duke, and a shock to the sense of the security of property; but, so long as the rights of those who held under the Duke were respected, comparatively little mischief would be done.

Is it needed to point to the effects of this policy of Government, seen even in this day? While it has, by stifling other industries, made the land a greater necessity for the people, it has hindered the bulk of the people in their acquirement of rights in it.

It has interrupted that slow but steady growth of rights of property which form the strongest bonds of society. It has kept society divided into the small land-owning class, whose rights in the soil were absolute, and the large land-tilling class, who could hardly be said to have any rights. It created that small land-owning class from a small minority, whose religion, established in the

country, was, through long centuries, a badge of conquest and oppression.

"Thus was rendered impossible any sympathy between these two antagonistic divisions of society. Thus was rendered impossible the creation of a coherent united public opinion. The interest, the religions, and, to a great extent, the races composing Irish society, became antagonistic.

It is not too much to say that, until years within living memory, the government of Ireland has been on the principle of defending and strengthening this small land-owning class as if they were a garrison in a hostile country. It is certainly not too soon to try the effects of legislation in the interests of the people. I hope it may not be too late.

I shall next proceed to indicate the character of the remedial legislation which, I think, is urgently called for.

CHAPTER X.

REMEDIAL SCHEME.

Existing Land System broken down—Perennial source of misery and pauperism—Serious changes necessary but no confiscation advocated—Ulster Custom may be dismissed—A practically uncontrolled right to increase Rent renders Right of Sale valueless—Objections to Periodical Re-valuations—No automatic plan for regulating Rent practicable—Scheme: (1) Abolition of Settlement tying up land; (2) Extinction, by purchase, of mid-interests; (3) For all agricultural tenants, fixity of tenure at fair rents fixed once and for all, with provisions against subdividing, &c.; (4) Abolition of Hanging Gale in certain cases; (5) Right in Tenant to buy up his Rent wholly or in part; (6, 7 and 8) Establishment of a Land Commission with power compulsorily to buy all Corporate and all mortgaged Estates, all waste lands, and all Estates voluntarily offered for sale, paying owners by Land Bonds; (9) Such Lands to be sold to the Tenants, payment in annual instalments in discharge of principal and interest in (not exceeding) fifty-two years These to constitute an occupying proprietary.

HAVING now described the condition of the district in Ireland which I examined this autumn, with the desire of arriving at the truth, I may reasonably be asked, Have I any remedies to propose as a cure for the state of things disclosed?

One thing, at least, seems clear—the existing system has utterly broken down; prosperity, and with prosperity content, have not grown up under it; a great part of the country is in sad distress—in none can the system be said

to have produced satisfaction. On the contrary, it has proved a perennial source of misery and pauperism, and of ill-will between classes. It has been long tried and been found wanting.

I assume without argument that it is not alone the right, but the duty, of the State to order its land system with a view to the welfare of the people, and this even although serious injury to particular interests were to result—*à fortiori* if that welfare can be secured without such injury. The maxim "*Salus populi suprema lex*" still holds good.

I admit it is upon those who invoke Parliament to interfere with the operation of natural laws to justify that interference. I claim, however, that I have established the existence of an exceptional and unsound condition of things, artificially produced by bad laws and evil policy, and now calling for exceptional legislative redress.

I shall therefore discuss the question, assuming that serious changes are necessary, and that they are within the competence and the duty of the State to effect. Serious changes I shall certainly advocate, but none which will in my opinion work injustice. A fresh confiscation in the nineteenth century would not undo the evils wrought by those past confiscations which have played so ill a part in Irish history. Neither can a secure settlement be hoped for by giving rights of property to any class without a just price being paid for them.

In any judicious land reform the aim of the statesman should, I submit, be to set advantages before the tenants to be earned by thrift, self-denial, and exertion. I offer

my suggestions with diffidence. I know how much easier it is to criticise existing systems than construct new ones.

I can, however, state with more confidence what will not answer the needs of the time. I say emphatically that no patching-up, no extension, no modification of the so-called Ulster custom, will avail.

The action of the landlords themselves in Ulster, especially since 1870, has shattered the confidence of the people in the efficacy of that custom. Since that Act, the position of many tenants in Ulster has been injured. The landlords have treated that Act as if it was an insult to them; they have in effect said, "Make the most of your statutory protection; you need expect nothing from our good-will."

It needs little consideration to see that a right in the tenant to sell his interest in his holding cannot long have a healthy existence side by side with a power practically uncontrolled in the landlord to raise the rent. That power, exercised by small gradual increments of rent, stealthily but surely eats into the very vitals of the custom.

Two illustrations are as good as a hundred. I use the first because the facts are almost within my own knowledge. It occurred in a locality with which I am well acquainted, and with a landlord who, as he thought, recognised the Ulster custom, and it is a case of recent date. By the shore of Carlingford Lough this landlord had let to a tenant at the rent of about £7 a-year, some fifteen acres on the hillside which until then spade had never entered. The tenant built his homestead upon it,

he fenced it, did such drainage as was needed, and after years of toil brought it into a state of decent cultivation. He died last year. His family, with the exception of his wife and one daughter, had gone to America. His widow, finding herself unable, as she thought, to work the land, desired to sell her interest. She lately consulted her landlord; he approved of her plan, and kindly (for she was illiterate) undertook the preparation of the notice advertising the sale; but when prepared there appeared at the foot of it the ominous announcement that, for the incoming tenant, the rent in future would be £15 a year!

Remember, the landlord had not directly or indirectly expended one single penny on the widow's holding. This case occurred but a few months ago.

The other illustration occurred a few weeks ago, and in the heart of Antrim, in Ballymena. The sale of the tenant's interest, according to the much-belauded but little understood, Ulster custom, was about to take place. The auctioneer was in his rostrum. Enter the bailiff, who grimly announces that 75 per cent. will be put on to the rent to the incoming tenant! In the first of these cases the landlord was a Catholic; in the last a Protestant. Both professed—one of them loudly—Liberal politics.

Further, I feel confident, that no system which contemplates a future periodical re-valuation of rents will be found effective, or satisfactory, either to landlord or tenant. If, therefore, the plan known as the "three F's" contemplates, not a rent fixed once and for all, but periodical

re-valuation, I believe it would prove an endless source of ill-will and discontent.

I know no sound automatic arrangement by which rent may equitably be made to rise and fall. If the only alternative between periodical readjustments of rent and its permanent fixture at what the tenant would consider too high a point, I think he would, in many cases, prefer the latter because of its certainty. What is now to be done ought to be done with a view to a permanent settlement—as far as there can be permanence in the shifting conditions of human society.

I may therefore at once say that in my opinion the main direction which the settlement of this question should take is, so far as it can be done, to turn the occupiers of agricultural holdings in Ireland into, as I prefer to call them, not peasant but *occupying proprietors*, securing them in the meanwhile in the possession of their holdings, at rents justly ascertained and fixed now, once and for ever. In cases, however, which lie outside the scheme which I propound, I can recognise the utility of having some authority to which to appeal as to rent.

It must be obvious, from what I have already written, that, in many instances in Ireland, to stereotype the existing condition of things in the case of small and poor holdings would not be to secure comfort to the tenant. A reduction to what even the tenants would consider a fair rent would not mean the difference between want and plenty.

In very few of the instances given do the rent-increases amount to much. It is the accompanying un-

certainty which causes the mischief. The most is not made of the land. The tenant is content to live from hand to mouth. But even what to us seems an inconsiderable rent-increase does sensibly affect the small Irish tenant. It is wonderful upon how little some Irish tenants can live, and what a change a small accession of means can effect.

Even in the case of the very small and poor holdings (which I should hope to see gradually disappear), I have no doubt, that perfect security, prompting the tenant to unstinted exertion, would enable him to take much more out of the land than he does at present, and thus better his condition. It could not make it worse.

Still it is clear that there will yet remain cases—probably many—in Ireland which no scheme of finally fixing a fair rent, or of converting the tenant into a proprietor, will fully meet, and in reference to which the remedy must either be migration or emigration.

The clearances effected in the famine years, and since, have devoted to sheep and cattle large tracts of fertile land capable of sustaining many families in decent condition; but it does not seem possible to formulate any plan by which Parliament can undo the work so effected. The desired change must be brought about by the gradual action of time and progress.

But these famine clearances suggest sad reflections. I do not speak of the weight of misery they must have occasioned. But they have led in many parts to this result:—that where the land has most people-sustaining power the population is thinnest—where it has least people-

sustaining power the population is thickest. See to what this points. That according to existing law whole country-sides—the best and richest lands—may be cleared if three or four landlords will it, and that these are restrained mainly by motives of self-interest, at times, in part, by motives of humanity. Is this a power good for the state?

I have pointed to vast tracts of waste land capable of reclamation which lie side by side with that which the tenants have already reclaimed. I believe that the waste but reclaimable lands in Ireland have been estimated at some millions of acres, exclusive of the enclosed lands, the productive capacity of which could readily be doubled. If these were properly dealt with, and, where advisable, added to the existing holdings, the cases would be comparatively few in which there would not be land sufficient (under the new energy which the sense of security would give) to support the existing tenants and their families in at least rude comfort.

But to carry out such a plan as I suggest the necessity is clear for the creation of a strong and permanent Land Commission, which shall have functions of a judicial, an executive, and of a ministerial character. At these I shall presently glance.

With this preface I state in outline my remedial suggestions.

1. I would, as far as practicable, abolish every system of settlement or entail which can interfere with the sale or dealing with land absolutely at any given moment. In other words, I would require that there shall always be a person with absolute dominion over the land able to

sell and make good title to it. Let the proceeds of the sale of the land be tied up or settled in any way you please; but leave the land itself free to be dealt with.

2. In all cases where land is held by middle men, that is, lessees intermediate between the owner in fee and the occupier, I would give to whichever of the parties had the major interest in the holding the right to buy out the other on payment to him of such sum as might be agreed on, or failing such agreement, then on payment of such sum as the Commission should award; and I should give to the owner of the minor interest a corresponding right to purchase, in the event of the owner of the major interest failing to purchase for six months after he had been served with notice calling on him to elect to purchase or sell.

3. I would declare every tenant of an agricultural holding in Ireland, who at the date of the passing of the proposed Act, or at any subsequent date, had been by himself or by his predecessor in title, say, ten years in occupation of his holding, entitled to demand from his landlord a fee-farm grant or lease for ever of his holding, at a rent to be fixed at the date of such demand once and for ever, subject to a right on the part of the landlord to appeal to the Commission, and show special circumstances which should equitably disentitle the tenant to the grant. The rent should be fixed, if possible, by agreement between landlord and tenant, but in cases of disagreement to be fixed by or at the instance of the Commission referred to. Probably the services of Judges of the County Courts could be utilised for this purpose.

When fixing the rent, all improvements made either by landlord or tenant, and any fine paid by the tenant to the landlord on entry, should respectively be taken into account, also any special circumstances pointing to probable prospective value affecting the particular holding.

Every such fee-farm grant should be in a form to be prescribed by the statute, and of the shortest and simplest kind. Each such grant should, by statute, imply covenants by the tenant to pay the fixed rent and keep the premises in repair, against waste, against sub-leasing, subletting, or subdividing, without landlord's consent; but no covenant against charging or selling his interest. Mines and minerals to be reserved to the landlord. On breach of any covenant the landlord to have a right to demand a sale of the tenant's interest, with right of pre-emption. Two years' arrears of rent to be a first charge upon the proceeds; for any greater arrear, landlord to rank with ordinary creditors.

4. Wherever it could be proved that at the date of the passing of the Act the rule for ten years on any estate had been to allow a hanging gale or gales of rent for that uninterrupted period, I should declare such gale or gales as absolutely irrecoverable, and as for all future rent, I should declare that any rent beyond two years' rent should be a mere personal debt due by the tenant, and should, as against the land or the proceeds of the tenant's interest, rank with other creditors.

5. I should allow each tenant whose rent was permanently fixed to buy up at any time at twenty-five years, or at any lesser number of years' purchase that might be

agreed on, his rent, or any part of his rent, not being less than £1, subject to the landlord being entitled to show special circumstances which would make the exercise of that power in the particular case inequitable." In order to obviate any inconvenience to the landlord from having payments made in sums too small for advantageous investment, I would, if necessary, provide for interim payments of such moneys to the Land Commission. I regard some such provision as this as of the highest moment.

6. I would give the Land Commission power to insist upon the sale of corporate estates, and of all estates mortgaged beyond a certain proportion of their value, say 75 per cent. But in this latter case, unless by the consent of the owners, no more of the estate should be sold than would be needed to pay off the incumbrances.

7. The Land Commission should have statutory powers to buy and deal with: (*a*) All the waste lands in the country; (*b*) the estates lastly above referred to (No. 6); (*c*) all other estates as to which the Legislature might consider it right to give the Commission compulsory powers of purchase; and (*d*) all such estates as may be voluntarily offered for sale.

8. On any purchase of an estate being made by the Land Commission they should pay the owner by land bonds with Government security, bearing interest at 3 per cent., redeemable at par. The owner should be entitled to receive so much in bonds, as at the current price of the day, would represent the full purchase-money of the estate. He is thus put into possession of a security at once convertible into cash if he desires that course,

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or to try any investment offering a higher rate of interest.

9. The lands so purchased should be sold by the Commission to the tenants to be held in fee-simple, such sales to be in consideration of such cash payment and annual instalments in discharge of principal and interest, and thrown over such number of years, not exceeding fifty-two, as to the Commission should seem best.

Provided, however, that all calculations for the payment by annual instalments should be based on the assumption that not less than 3 per cent. interest should be secured to the State on all money due by the purchasers. So long as the tenants remained debtors to the State for any part of the purchase-money, such tenants to hold upon the terms, and subject to the restrictions, substantially as mentioned as to fee-farm grants under head No. 3. These are directed to prevent any undue subdivision or overcrowding.

10. I would appropriate the balance of the Irish Church surplus as a guarantee fund to indemnify the State against possible loss in these transactions.

11. The Land Commission should keep a set of registry books, divided into counties or into poor law unions, in which all dealings with lands which pass through the hands of the Commission should be entered, such entry to be the only registration recognised as affecting such lands. This would inaugurate a system of local registration like that in France, and would tend to simplify and cheapen the dealings with land. It might easily be adapted in course of time to cover all dealings with land.

12. The want of timber in Ireland is sorely felt. I would, therefore, authorise the Commission to deal with the waste lands purchased by them, which could not be profitably reclaimed for tillage, or otherwise utilised, so as best to promote planting.

13. I would throw upon the Land Commission all proper expenses of examination of titles and of conveyancing in connection with all estates dealt with by them, and such examination of titles and conveyancing should, as far as possible, be carried out under the direction of the Land Commission, and should not be referred to any other Court.

There are certain minor but not unimportant matters to be considered, which, however, do not strictly fall under the category of land reforms, as, for instance, some provision as to emigration. The position of the labourer also is an important matter which deserves attention.

For my part, however, I believe that the general land question once settled on a sound basis, that as to the labourers will present little difficulty.

I believe these propositions contain the elements of the truest Conservatism, in its best, not in its party sense. They would supply to Ireland what she had never had, that stable element of a numerous class which, secured in their holdings, and thus having a stake in the country, would be enlisted on the side of order.

Hitherto Ireland has been, and she still is, divided into two great classes—the landowning and the land-occupying class. In Ireland there is not to any appreciable extent, as in England or Scotland, a middle class, represented by manufacturers and by merchants. In Ireland the land is

everything. In Ireland more than one-half of the entire income of the country is derived from the land; in England not one-seventh.

In Ireland you have some 12,000 considerable landowners and some 600,000 tenants, the great majority tenants-at-will. Who can doubt that, if you transform these 600,000 tenants, or half that number, from tenants-at-will into proprietors, you would supply a factor of enormous Conservative strength in the preservation of society.

After all, the Legislature is in these suggestions only asked to do on a large scale what is every day done on a small scale. Where the public need of a road or a railway, or other work of general utility, requires the compulsory expropriation of a particular man's rights, they are expropriated. He has to give way to the needs of the community in which he lives. He is paid, not what he may consider the value of that which is taken from him, but the full compensation which the appointed legal tribunal awards him.

The changes proposed for Ireland are great because the need is great. The question now to be solved concerns not the tenants nor the landlords alone; it concerns the well-being—nay, the life—of the entire nation.

CHAPTER XI.

DISCUSSION OF REMEDIAL SCHEME.

Some points common to all Land reforms—Fixity of Tenure and certainty as to Rent justified as being necessary and practical—Contrasted with periodical Re-valuations and Rents rising and falling with price of produce—Practical effect of this Scheme—While advantageous to the Tenant gives the Landlord greater security—Will not drive better-class residents out of Ireland—Will not stereotype small holdings but probably aid healthy consolidation and emigration—This explained—Right to redeem their Rent wholly or in part the best incentive to habits of thrift—No real injustice to Landlord—Justification of Scheme as to Lands to be acquired by Commission—Difficulty as to absentee Estates—Importance of dealing with Waste Lands—Mode of payment by Land Commission for property purchased will involve no present advance of money—Land Bonds probably popular medium of investments—Prospect of loss to the State slight.

I DESIRE now briefly to consider the several propositions of the scheme of land reform which I have set forth in the preceding chapter.

I propose to consider the objects sought to be accomplished by the proposed scheme, and to endeavour to meet the objections which it is probable will be urged. I am under obligations to many correspondents who have been good enough to point out to me, but in no hostile spirit, the difficulties which they think lie in my path. The

majority of these are English correspondents. This is hopeful. It shows that the thoughtful mind of England is alive to the importance of coping with the difficulties of this grave and pressing question.

I take my propositions in order.

I. *Abolition of Entail.*—Land reformers are practically agreed that as far as is possible this must be the initial step in any land reform. The object is to secure the existence of an owner able at all times to deal with the land as occasion requires. It leaves untouched any desired settlement of the money which represents the value of the land.

II. *The Extinction of Mid-interests.*—This is a reform of the same character as the last. It seeks to put an end to the pernicious system of middlemen, and upon the principle analogous to the legislation relating to the enfranchisement of copyhold lands in England (see the Copyhold Act of 1858). The importance of this point in Ireland will be judged when it is stated that dealings with from one-fifth to one-seventh of Irish land is hampered by the existence of these mid-interests. But more; it is generally safe to say when you come across an exceptionally squalid tenantry that there the middleman has been at work. He has no permanent interest in the estate. His object is to get the most out of it in his time. He cares little how it is cut up and subdivided.

III. *The creation of Fee-farm Grantees or perpetual leaseholders at rents fixed once and for all.*—In support of this proposal it must be assumed that previous argument and discussion have shown the necessity of certainty of tenure;

in other words, that to give fair play to the energies of the tenants and to develop the resources of the soil, it is needful that fixity shall be given to them. Practically, fixity they have on a great number of Irish estates, but without the sense of security that ought to accompany it.

If, then, real fixity is necessary, the question remains, upon what terms? Is it to be (*a*) at a rent fixed once for all; or (*b*) a rent ascertained periodically, but to rise and fall in a certain ratio to the average prices of produce over a certain period; or (*c*) is it to be a rent periodically re-valued—say every ten years?

I shall best justify my preference for the first of these by stating my objections to the other two. How is the automatic plan to be worked? What classes of produce, applied to what districts, and in what proportions? Again; why should a rise in price of produce merely, necessarily increase the rent? For, may it not happen—has it not, in fact, happened—that, while produce may rise 25 per cent. in value, cost of production may rise 75 per cent in value?

Again; may it not be said of many products in Ireland that a limited production in quantity enhances the price; and is a tenant to pay more rent because he has got a good price for a small crop? And, again; does not this reference to price of produce, as the regulating influence in rent, assume that what is called the "unearned increment" in value of the land—that is, the value which comes from external causes, as greater demand, proximity of railway, or of a rising town, &c.—belongs wholly to the landlord? Is this sound? If the tenant has, by

occupation and improvement, acquired an interest in his holding and increased its value, is he not entitled, in respect of his interest, to get credit for a proportional part of this increased increment? These are some of the difficulties which occur to me.

As to periodical re-valuation of rent, I doubt whether, in the true interest of either landlord or tenant, it is desirable. By finally fixing the rent the tenant is secured against increase, and has the certainty that the net overplus of production, after paying his rent, is indeed his own. As against this, the tenant takes upon himself the risk of fall in the letting value of land. On the other hand, the landlord has in the amount fixed as the perpetual rent, the benefit of the fair prospects of prospective increase in value—if there be such.

Nor is it true to say that the landlord, while he has lost the chance of future increase, has not gained greater security. He has. This scheme rests upon the assumption that fixity in tenure and in rent would be a notable boon to the tenant—a possession which he will struggle to retain.

Every year that he holds his land with this consciousness of security upon him adds to its value. He works as he never did before, because he works upon what is practically his own. The land becomes his bank for any savings he may have or can acquire.

If this is not a just view of the probable—nay, the morally certain effect—of this portion of the scheme, it has no justification.

But consider what a disturbing cause would be the proposed periodical re-valuations. It would, I fear, for

months before and months after unsettle the mind of the country. The turmoil of a presidential election may suggest the state of things likely to happen.

I wish to point out briefly what I think would be the probable practical effect of this scheme. On estates liberally managed—that is, where the holdings were let upon what I may call "liveable" terms to the tenants—I should doubt whether it would have any great operation. This for the reason that the tenants would know that they may have to pay a high price for the fixity of tenure which they desire—namely, a possible increase in rent. But in the cases in which the holdings are let on terms which, to repeat the same word, are not "liveable," I should expect and hope that this scheme would have a very important effect.

It would thus have least operation in the case of what are called good and liberal landlords, and most in the case of what are called bad and harsh landlords. The Act of 1870 operated in part in just the opposite fashion, for Section 3 gives compensation for disturbance for the *loss sustained* by the tenant by disturbance, so that where the terms were fairest, the loss was greatest, and where the terms were hardest, the loss was smallest. In other words, the liberal landlord was liable to pay more than the illiberal one.

The objection that the rent being fixed once and for all the landlord would become merely a rent-chargeant is true. But when it is said that this, in its turn, would deprive landlords of all inducement to live in the country, I think the statement is more than doubtful.

It deprives the good landlord practically of nothing, but it certainly deprives the harsh landlord of the power of bullying and "managing," as the phrase is, the tenants. But is it for the true interests of the community that he should be allowed to retain this power? Its deprivation may possibly induce some landlords to live abroad who now live on their estates. But I cannot think it will generally have any such effect.

Does any one believe that the existing power in the landlord to raise his tenants' rents, to evict, and to interfere by office rules, even in his social life, and generally to "manage," conduces to the harmony of the relations between them? It seems unlikely, to say the least, that it is the cordiality of existing relations which induces the Irish landlords to live at home. More frequently it is old association, motives of economy, and, strange though it may be, attachment to the people, with all their faults and shortcomings. Is it likely that with improved landlord-and-tenant relations these inducements to remain will be less?

It may be objected, further, that this scheme would stereotype small holdings, and fix upon the land persons without capital or thrift. I believe its operation would be exactly the reverse. I believe it would have the effect of speedily lessening the small holdings, and help the processes of consolidation and emigration, where consolidation and emigration would be really desirable.

For the first time the qualities energy, thrift, and self-denial would have a fair chance of asserting themselves. These, in the race of life, soon tell. As they are displayed some men wax strong in means, and, advancing, improve

their social life; others grow weak and fall behind. At present the weak cling on, and having only a vague and uncertain interest in their holdings, make no attempt to realise it—even where by office rule it is realisable—until arrears of rent have eaten it up, and thus they gravitate into the workhouse, or into the back slums of the large towns. Under the new system these men, having a definite interest to realise, would, if they found their farms too small for support, sell their interest; and if they desired to emigrate, could emigrate, not penniless, but with some means at their command to make a start in a new country. Who would be their successors? Who, indeed, if not their immediate neighbours, into whose holdings the vacated holdings fitted, and who could best afford to pay for them?

Further, if the effect of certainty of tenure and of rent will be, as I contend, to increase the produce of the land, that means increase of wealth; which, again, means either its investment in new branches of industry, thus withdrawing people from the land, or its investment by its possessors in more land, which means consolidation of farms. Let it, moreover, be borne in mind, that the proposed grantees would be stringently restrained from subdivision or subletting, at least, to a point considered baneful.

IV. *Abolition of hanging Gale ten years old.*—This provision is intended to apply where, by the course of dealing, the hanging gale has been treated as practically dead and gone; but where it is kept alive only to be used as an instrument of oppression. In fact, it might be almost said that such gale is barred by the Statute of

Limitations. In the application of this and other propositions cases may be put in which, in exceptional circumstances, hardship or injustice might be worked. I need not say care must be taken to avoid such results.

V. *To allow tenants to redeem their rent wholly or in part at twenty-five years' purchase.* — This proposition will probably meet with more disfavour from English opinion than from Irish landlords. English opinion will probably object to it on theoretic grounds, as being a startling interference with rights of landlords. Many of the latter in Ireland will see great practical advantages in it. It will serve as a handy means of helping to discharge incumbrances; it will effectually secure the balance of the landlord's rent.

Such rents are not worth nearly twenty-five years' purchase; but, as the tenant, under this proposal, redeems a part of the rent, the balance will acquire the character of head-rents, and probably fetch twenty-five years' purchase, which would be a decided gain to the landlord.

I have suggested some guard against probable inconvenience to the landlord in his investments from the smallness of the redemption payments to be made. I think no inconvenience is likely to result.

But I regard this power as one which should legally exist, even if it entailed serious cost. As a means of bringing about habits of thrift, bringing to each man a sense of property, and with it an interest in the maintenance of order, I can conceive no better plan than that of enabling the tenants to purchase up their rents piecemeal. The knowledge that if he saves £25 he can buy up £1 of his rent

and get rid of it for ever, would be a wonderful incitement to thrift and industry. It is something tangible. It is an object present to his mind; it does not loom vaguely in the distance. I venture to say the man who has once purchased up £1 of his rent will never rest till he has purchased up the entire of it.

VI. *Compulsory powers in the Land Commission to buy.*—These I propose should extend to all corporation estates, and to all estates mortgaged beyond 75 per cent. of their value. To justify this power, it must be assumed that the creation of occupying proprietors, is a desirable object If so, lands must be obtained, with which the proposed Land Commission can, with that object, deal. I suggest these two classes of estates, because they involve less interference with private rights of property than any others. In the case of estates mortgaged up to 75 per cent. of their value the real owner (as he is, in fact, the owner of the legal estate) is the mortgage-holder. I leave open the question how far the estates of absentees may be dealt with by the State. For myself I see great difficulty in defining what an absentee is. Is a man who lives ten months in England and two months on his estate in Ireland an absentee? Is a man who lives in Dublin and never visits his estate at all an absentee? Where is the line to be drawn? Moreover, it is to be said that, speaking as a rule, the estates of large proprietors—commonly English noblemen—are generally managed liberally on the "live-and-let-live" principle.

If it be regarded as a penalty to deal with estates by compulsory purchase, they have, speaking generally, done

nothing specially to deserve the penalty of interference. At the same time, many thinking politicians besides, and since the time of, Lord George Bentinck have considered that they might with propriety be exceptionally dealt with. I do not further discuss this question. It cannot be other than a serious matter to the country to be drained of an enormous yearly sum, no part of which is expended in the country in which it is raised.

VII. *Further powers in the Land Commission.* — In addition to the estates last mentioned in No. VI., it is proposed to give the Land Commission power to buy and deal with the waste lands in the country, and also to buy and deal with all estates voluntarily offered for sale. These powers are of course suggested mainly with a view of supplying a greater area of land on which to create the assumed desirable class of occupying proprietors. The policy being admitted to be sound, it is not necessary to say anything as to estates voluntarily saleable, except to justify the scheme financially.

As to waste lands, interference may be justified upon the ground that no men have a right, to the injury of the community, to keep wealth-producing land unused. The right to interfere is clear enough, but the application of the right unquestionably in many cases would present difficulties.

Landlords would not unnaturally object to portions of their estate being interfered with, especially in order to be made the subject of experimenting in occupying proprietorship. It might be answered that in such cases the landlord might, if he chose, sell his estate or portions of it,

waste and all; and probably, in many cases, this could and would be done without working any mischief.

I believe that in the great majority of cases the waste lands can be dealt with best by being made to supplement existing holdings.

I cannot attempt to formulate any complete plan with this object. I can only say that most men who have thought over the question agree that by dealing with the waste lands a large source of wealth is available. But, to make it available in many cases, operations on so extended a scale are required, as to be, even in the case of many proprietors, impossible. I mean, for example, extensive arterial drains. For the rest, the unused labour of the small farmer and his household not required for his farm, and which now goes to waste, could be profitably employed to do the work. As the Kerry peasant said to me, the days would be twice as long when the place was his own to work on.

Some men object on economic grounds to Government being asked to help any expenditure in capital or labour, on waste lands in Ireland, when by emigration they could be more wisely expended on more fertile lands abroad.

This seems to me to take no account of men's feelings of attachment to the country of their birth. Moreover, you cannot, in spite of themselves, deport them; even if you would. You are not creating a new state of society, but only attempting, by modifications, to render endurable that which exists. By all means help emigration for

those who desire it, and trust to spread of knowledge to its being resorted to, where it is healthful and needed.

VIII. *Payment for the property purchased by the Land Commission.*—It is proposed that this should be affected by land bonds with Government security, bearing interest at 3 per cent. The scheme involves no present advance in money by the State. The annual payments by the occupying proprietors would be calculated to cover not alone the accruing interest on the bonds, but the purchase money. The bonds would themselves, especially if issued in sufficiently small amounts, prove a popular medium of investment. I think the chance of loss to the State would not be great.

CHAPTER XII.

FURTHER DISCUSSION OF THE REMEDIAL SCHEME—CONCLUSION.

The creation of Occupying Proprietors—An extension of the principle of the Bright Clauses of the Act of 1870—Desirability of creating such admitted, if cost not too high—Objections stated and discussed—Danger of subdivision long postponed—Now no tendency towards subdivision—Public opinion and particularly the opinion of the Tenant Class would support Commission in insisting on strict contract observance—Loss to the State improbable—Opportunities to assist Emigration—Changed opinion in Ireland on this subject—Important evidence of feasibility of establishing Occupying Proprietorship drawn from experience in relation to Church Lands. SUMMING-UP: Anticipated effect of Scheme to give backbone to Irish society, winning to the side of order and authority forces now adverse—Rights of Property only interfered with where general interests required it—Legislative interference called for to alter a Land System itself exceptional—Even with amended Law much must depend on the People themselves—Objection answered that nothing short of Revolution will satisfy the Irish People—Comparison of Ireland a quarter of a century since and now—Legislative change—To whom due—Ireland more united in its demands on the Land Question than it has ever been before.

I RESUME and conclude my explanation of the Scheme for which I bespeak the consideration of the thinking public.

IX. *Creation of Occupying Proprietors.*—It is at once apparent that this proposition is only giving a wider area of application to, and greater facility of working out, the

purposes contemplated by the Bright Clauses in the Act of 1870. I do not stop to point out the obstacles which, even in their limited area of application, existed in the working of those clauses. They are well explained by the useful labours of Mr. Shaw Lefevre's Committee in 1878. I have previously given the general reasons why I think it of the highest moment that there should be an increase, and a large increase, in the number of the owners of the land in Ireland.

I think the desirability of making the tillers of the soil also the owners of the soil is generally admitted. It is generally admitted that such a creation of occupying proprietors would supply a much wanted and binding element in society in Ireland. But it is said that you may pay too high a price even for this. I propose, therefore, without further preface, to state and discuss, with brevity, the objections that are made to this scheme.

It is said it would tend to perpetuate small and inadequate holdings. I have already endeavoured to meet this objection in discussing a similar one in reference to the creation of fee farm grantees. For the reasons already given I think it would have an opposite effect.

I should desire to guard against the application to Ireland of English notions as to the policy of large farms. As a rule I think this system is not suited to the greater part of Ireland, and certainly not suited to that part whose condition we have been investigating. Further, let it be remembered, law cannot wipe out, it can but modify the existing order of things. It would be to consider the impracticable to contemplate the creation of a new state of

things in which the country is to be plotted out again in farms of convenient size, and the population which is squeezed out to be deported to other climes.

Further, it is objected that not only would this scheme perpetuate small and inadequate holdings, but it would lead to further pernicious subdivision. This is an objection which requires to be met and answered, because it is undoubtedly true that once the occupier has acquired the status of proprietor he may subdivide his property at will. But, first, I would point out that, by my proposed scheme, absolute security against subdivision is provided so long as any portion of the purchase-money is unpaid. Inasmuch as such payments are made to extend over a period not exceeding fifty-two years, and would not probably (except in a very small percentage of cases) be made in less than twenty-five, you secure an interval of time to allow for the trial of occupying proprietorship absolutely relieved from the danger of subdivision. You thus allow the rise of a new order of ideas under a new condition of things, in which the new owners may, it is hoped, be trusted to obtain a clear view of what their interests call for. The sense of property has begun to be felt; it soon leavens the mass of the people.

But more; after considerable inquiry upon the point I have come to the conclusion that there does not now exist, as there once did, a dangerous tendency towards subdivision. The tendency is rather towards consolidation. In support of this I would refer to the important evidence given by Mr. M. O'Brien, valuator to the Church Temporalities Commission, and of Major Dalton, agent to the

Marquis of Headfort, amongst others, given before Mr. Shaw Lefevre's Committee in 1878.

Even the great subdivision does not necessarily mean the pauperisation of a country. In 1823 M'Culloch prophesied that in fifty years France would be the greatest pauper warren in Europe. It has not proved so. When the prophesied time arrived France was subjected to a great national trial, and bore it bravely. It paid off with apparent ease the heaviest tribute ever exacted by one nation from another. As Mr. Kay says in in his 'Free Trade in Land,' it did so to a great extent, if not mainly, from the funds of the rural classes. In saying this, I by no means desire to convey that France and Ireland are parallel cases.

Further, it is objected that this scheme will put a Government body (such as the contemplated Land Commission) in the position of creditors of the tenant farmers in Ireland, and that this is objectionable. This may mean either that the Land Commission might be brought, in case of non-payment of instalments, in undesirable conflict with a large body of the people, or it may mean that such Commission should not be put in a position of possibly losing large sums in the proposed experiment. I do not think there is any danger to be apprehended on either ground.

Always assuming that this scheme would be accepted by those for whose benefit it is intended, as a great boon, the opinion of the country, and of the great class benefited, would be an enormous moral force on the side of the Commission, insisting on regularity of payment. As has been shrewdly stated to me, those who had paid would

resent any leniency to those who had not, because it would seem to place the latter in a favoured position. Thus, what one may call local opinion, would be an influence in favour of strict observance of contract.

Regarding the second objection as to loss, this is, of course, possible. I do not think it in any way probable, provided the Commission buy under conditions of ordinary prudence. If an occupier falls behind in his payments, the rule ought to be prompt sale of his interest.

Such failure I should expect most frequently to occur in the case of small holdings. It is here, I think, there might with advantage be aids to emigration. The objections to emigration are not what they once were; the undertaking is not now regarded as a formidable effort, and if, instead of limiting the assistance to emigrate to the mere deportation from the shores of one country to the shores of another, which too commonly it has been, some provision were made for their future by providing some certain field of settlement and labour, many would be found willing to avail themselves of the opportunity to try life in a new country.

Emigration schemes are too commonly associated in the minds of the people with enforced eviction, rotten ships, bad food, scant clothing, cold; and then, on the other far western shores, a strange unfriendly field where no helping hand was stretched out to them, no aid given to put them in the way of honest and remunerative industry. Emigration was too commonly treated as if it had served its object when the Irish people were transported from the land of their birth; that effected, it mattered little what became of them.

The emigration which is now going on is to the State the most weakening of all. It is the emigration in units of the young and the strong of both sexes, while there are left behind the aged and the infirm. What I should desire to see encouraged, but only where it was clearly for their advantage, is a transplanting of the family tree, or of the small "congested" village in the west or south, where nature has not been bountiful in the richness of the land.

Finally, it is objected the result would be to create a dead dull level of small peasant proprietors, a state of society which, it is argued, contains no element of healthy progress, for it contains no examples of higher social life or higher mental cultivation. This is a misunderstanding of the scheme. I have already pointed out why I think it probable that the local gentlemen residents will well-nigh be as numerous as before. But more, the scheme does not contemplate peasant proprietorship. It contemplates occupying proprietorship, and is not limited to holdings of 20, 50, 100, or 500 acres of land.

I have already referred to the evidence upon one point of Mr. O'Brien. His experience upon the feasibility of establishing a peasant or occupying proprietorship is unique and encouraging. In his character of valuator of the Church Temporalities Commission he has watched with intelligent interest the experiments in occupying proprietorship tried in the case of the Church lands. He states the result in the November number of the 'Fortnightly Review' in a way to encourage the opinion that occupying proprietorship can be satisfactorily accomplished with advantage to the community and without loss to the State.

The cases he gives show that the experiment was tried under severe conditions. It dealt with a poor class of property, and at a time when prices ran high. The buying tenants were subjected to onerous taxation in the matter of the law costs. Yet they struggled, and struggled successfully, to accomplish the great object of their lives, namely, to become, as they are fond of expressing it, their own landlords. He says that the average price obtained from the tenants was over twenty-three times the rent, which is somewhat higher than the average price of fee-simple property generally in the public market. He points out that the duty of the Church Commissioners was to obtain the best price, the creation of an occupying proprietary being merely incidental and subordinate; further, they were obliged to pay one-fourth of the purchase-money, the balance being left on mortgage at 4 per cent. He says:

"I may sum up by saying that the Church tenants were usually poor and struggling farmers, occupying an inferior and neglected class of property, and that, assisted by a loan, where desired, of three-fourths of the purchase-money, they paid a very high price for their holdings. In addition to this high price they had to pay the costs of their conveyances and mortgages, which were unnecessarily high, amounting in some cases to 30 per cent. on the purchase-money. How did these poor tenants buy, and pay these heavy expenses as well? By very great efforts and sacrifices, and by exercise of a remarkable thrift which is common among small Irish farmers, but for which they have not obtained credit with those who have not an intimate personal acquaintance with them. Some few had money by them, hardly earned and carefully saved; some sold their stock; others borrowed from friends, neighbours, solicitors and money-lenders, occasionally getting

the loan without any interest, in other cases paying from 4 to 20 per cent. for it. Some received the required amount as a gift from relations in America, the colonies, England or Scotland. Such gifts were not unusual, and will not surprise those who remember the large remittances made by the Irish abroad during and after the famine, which were estimated by Dr. Hancock to have amounted in twenty years to the enormous sum of £14,830,000—sent, in the words of Mr. Murray, who first drew attention to them, from husband to wife, from father to child, from child to father, mother and grandparent, from sister to brother, and from brother to sister, and from and to those united by all the ties of blood and friendship that bind us together upon earth."

Tried thus on a small scale and under such unfavourable conditions, there seems little reason to doubt that, more generally applied, and under more favourable conditions, it would be an economic, financial, and political success.

In the main, therefore, the three leading features of the scheme which I present for the judgment of honest and inquiring minds are (1) In all cases of agricultural holdings, on the conditions which I have specified, fixity as to tenure, certainty as to rent; (2) power in all such cases to redeem the rent, and, if necessary, piecemeal, at not exceeding twenty-five years' purchase; and (3) the creation of an occupying proprietary, with the help and under the auspices of a Land Commission of the nature generally which I have described.

It is not necessary to enlarge upon the careful details which might be necessary to give effect to that scheme. I have stated its pith and marrow. I think it would give backbone to Irish society. I think it would leaven with

a fresh spirit the whole mind of the country. I think it would win to the side of order and authority forces now arrayed against them.

It involves undoubted interference with existing rights of property, but only, I submit, such interference as the general interests call for. In no true sense does it involve injustice.

I would deal liberally with rights affected—more liberally than many of their owners have dealt with those under them whose very lives were in their hands. It is not a question of landlord and tenant only in Ireland; it affects all classes, and all professions, and all businesses. It affects the life and prosperity of towns, as it does the content of the country village. Nor is it an Irish question only. For has not Ireland been, and is she not now, the weakness of England and her reproach?

Let it be remembered, too, that if exceptional legislation is now asked for in Ireland, it is to help by peaceful means to undo the mischief wrought in evil times, which has led to a land system in itself exceptional—for the land system which England has forced on Ireland unquestionably is exceptional.

In no country in the world are the divisions so sharply marked between the land-tilling and the land-owning classes. Nowhere is to be found so small a proportion of land-tillers whose ploughshare furrows their own freehold. In France more than one-half of the land is in the occupation of the owners, and nearly two-thirds by persons having less than seventy-five acres. In Switzerland and the Rhine provinces the proportion of owners is even

greater. In Belgium one-third to one-half the land is owned by those who till it. In Prussia, Austria, Bavaria, Holland, Denmark, and Sweden the number of small owners cultivating their land is very great, and nearly one-half the labouring class possess small holdings averaging about five acres in extent.

The Legislature, therefore, is asked to help to undo a system, exceptional in itself, and which has been the fruitful cause of pauperism and bloodshed. It has choked the growth of the best qualities of the people, and encouraged their worst.

I am not sanguine enough to suppose that if such changes as I propose became law, the results would be immediately apparent; far from it. I doubt not that cases may be pointed to in the future where even the best incentives to thrift have not created thrift. Bad habits created by an evil condition of things die hard. They do not cease to be when the creating cause has ceased. But all known experience warrants the belief that gradually and soon a change will come; content taking the place of discontent, and the smile of prosperity lighting up the face of the land.

But even with good laws much remains for the people to do. In a country not highly endowed with richness in many parts, and with an uncertain climate, it requires habits of industry and of self-denial, even under conditions otherwise favourable, to create comfort and prosperity.

In many respects the Irish tenants have much to reform. He is no true friend of Ireland who makes

light of their faults, or who fails to impress upon them the fact that, while law may do much for evil, law can do little for good, unless its efforts find a response and support in the strivings and aspirations for improvement of the people themselves, strivings and aspirations showing themselves in habits of increased thrift, of order, and of sobriety.

A thought possesses some English minds that to consider measures of amelioration for Ireland is useless, since men in Ireland are sometimes found to say that nothing short of revolution and separation will satisfy the Irish people.

As to this, it seems to me that there is weighty sense in the remarkable statement laid before Mr. Lefevre's Committee in 1878 by Mr. Dix Hutton—the statement of thoughtful men representing different forms of religious and political opinion in Ireland. It expresses the opinion that there is good reason for believing the view which I have indicated to be alike erroneous and mischievous. It proceeds:—

"Between the extreme revolutionary party on the one hand, and the party of extreme Conservatism upon the other hand, stand the great mass of the people of Ireland, among whom reign, no doubt, much discontent, but discontent having its origin in real causes, not in visionary schemes, and which it is rash and unstatesmanlike to treat as incurable till the legitimate methods of cure have been attempted. There seems to be no good reason for doubting that if the tenure and industry of the peasant be made secure, the affection and allegiance of the people will follow in the wake of their interest, and, as has become the case over the face of the continent of Europe, the rural population will be the most determined

enemies of revolution. If something more be ultimately necessary for the complete satisfaction of Ireland, and if it become a question whether she should not have greater power over her own internal affairs than at present, such a result will come naturally and peacefully, with the disappearance of that disunion which artificial causes have fostered amongst her people, and will so come in a spirit of adhesion to the British connection and of loyalty to the Throne."

Were these opinions as unsound as they seem to be sound, it would still be the duty of those charged with the destinies of Ireland to make its laws conform to the just needs of the people, to make life tolerable under English government.

Loyalty finds its surest foundation in just laws, in the sense of rights protected, and of benefits conferred. It cannot long preserve its authority—it can never acquire popular respect—merely by presenting to the people its sterner front.

I conclude. A quarter of a century ago a politician, even then risen to distinction, in the English Parliament, in striking language described the evil condition of Ireland, afflicted by an alien Church, a territorial aristocracy absent from the land, and a starving population. He pointed out that if Englishmen read of that position of things in any other country, they would exclaim, "The only remedy is revolution;" but with incisive logic he demonstrated that that remedy was not open to Ireland, for she was restrained by her connection with another and more powerful country. "What then," he exclaimed, "is the duty of an English Minister? It is to effect by his policy all those changes which a

revolution would do by force. That is the Irish question in its integrity." The speaker was Mr. Disraeli.

Something has indeed been done since then, some progress has been made. But much yet remains to do. The alien Church is gone.

It is said by shallow observers that its removal has wrought no good to the country. This is not the view of those who look closer and deeper. Already there are signs that the different creeds in Ireland are being drawn closer together in all movements affecting the common interests of the community. The attitude of the people to-day proves it.

Notwithstanding the attempts made to divide them by base appeals to sectarian animosity—notwithstanding excesses which have repelled many from active co-operation—Ireland—north and south, east and west, Protestant, Presbyterian, and Catholic, is united upon this land question, as Ireland never has been united before.

The removal of that Church-badge of conquest and oppression Ireland owes mainly to one man—to him who now directs the policy of the State. He has done a giant's work, and yet it seems his mission to take in hand now, when he might have hoped to rest after his labours, a task which needs even all his genius and resolution. It is to him, with, I trust, the aid of honest and earnest men of every creed and party, that the people look to accomplish this.

May the work be thorough and just, to the contentment of Ireland and the good of the Kingdom!

APPENDIX.

THE following Letters appeared about the dates they respectively bear, and principally in the columns of the *Daily Telegraph*.

LETTER OF MRS. FRANCES O'MAHONY.

[See *ante*, p. 41, and for Mr. Russell's reply, *post*, p. 179.]

SIR,—Having just read in your paper of the 12th inst. a letter, entitled "New Views on Ireland," signed by "Charles Russell, Temple, Nov. 11," I beg the indulgence of space for a few remarks in justification of one now nearly seventeen years dead, who has been attacked by Mr. Russell with a flippancy which is only surpassed by the absence of truth in the greater part of his statement regarding Mr. Mahony. Speaking of Miss Hewson's property near Kenmare, he says:

"The property formerly belonged to one Mahony, of Cork, who, intending to sell it, raised the rents. With this the poor tenants had little to say; they could but submit. And having so by a word, as one may say, increased the apparent fee-simple value of his property, Mr. Mahony sold it to Miss Hewson."

Permit me to state facts, premising that "one Mahony, of Cork," although then residing in that city, was a member of one of the oldest families in the County

Kerry, his son being now in possession of a fee-simple estate which has descended to him through a long line of ancestors.

A year or two before the famine of 1845–46 Mr. Mahony bought the Kenmare property alluded to in Mr. Russell's letter, for £18,000, a price then deemed excessive by good judges of property. The land was in so bad a condition from want of draining, &c., that Mr. Mahony took advantage of the loans proffered by the Board of Works and laid out several thousand pounds on an extensive and perfect system of drainage. So great was the employment this gave during the famine years that the poor-rate in that barony was considerably less than in the surrounding districts. For a very long time Mr. Mahony neither asked nor received the rents the poor people would have found it so difficult to pay, but after several prosperous years a rent was put on each farm proportioned to *but not exceeding the value of the improvements made by the landlord.* I asked one of the tenants if he thought the increase of £6 or £7 a-year too much; he unhesitatingly answered "No," and that he could have paid it for the previous six years. At that time there was no idea of selling the property. When my late husband, Mr. Mahony's, health became precarious it was thought prudent to do so. The property was put up to public auction and sold in separate portions, some of them being bought by the tenants on the estate. In this way Miss Hewson has become the possessor of a farm or farms. The property brought between £5000 and £6000 more than the price (a fancy one) paid for it twelve or fifteen

years previously, in consequence of the landlord's improvements.—Regretting the exuberance of Mr. Russell's imagination, particularly when it maligns the dead, I am, Mr. Editor, your obedient servant,

Nov. 13. FRANCES O'MAHONY.

LETTER OF LORD EDMOND FITZMAURICE.

[See *ante*, p. 43, and for Mr. Russell's reply, *post*, p. 182.]

SIR,—In your columns of the last few days there have appeared a series of letters from the pen of Mr. Charles Russell, Q.C., in which several statements are contained injurious to the management of the estate in Kerry belonging to my brother, Lord Lansdowne.

I have not the slightest wish to impugn the perfect good faith of Mr. Charles Russell, but so great a proportion of the facts alleged by him are known by me—though I am myself unconnected with the management—to be inaccurate, misleading, and incorrect, that I feel myself fully justified in asking the public to regard his letters, so far as they relate to my brother's property, as being a purely *ex parte* statement, unsifted in the slightest degree, and, therefore, as a whole, unworthy of credence. One point—that in regard to the drainage loans—I have elsewhere already explained. As Mr. Charles Russell takes no notice of my explanation, I presume he has not seen it. It is not, however, in any manner my intention to enter into a controversy with him upon the various small details of his long indict-

ment, not only because, if it were necessary, I am not the right person to do so, but also because the *Standard* of Nov. 11, 14, and 18 contained letters from its Special Correspondent in regard to the same estate giving a totally different account from that of Mr. Charles Russell. There is another reason. My brother has been examined before the Royal Agricultural Commission in regard to his Irish estate, and the landlords, agents, and tenants of Kerry, and all who have grievances, have had a full opportunity of stating their respective views, and the facts supporting them, before the Commission presided over by Lord Bessborough. Those, therefore, who desire to hear both sides and form an impartial judgment will soon have the best evidence before them. Meanwhile, I protest against *ex parte* statements, whether favourable or not, being accepted as unquestioned truth.

The *gravamen* of Mr. Charles Russell's letters is the inhumanity and harshness of the general management, and he calls as his principal witnesses the "Nun" of Kenmare and the Home Rule Protestant rector, Mr. M'Cutcheon. Archdeacon Higgins, however, whose evidence was confirmed from many other sources, told your contemporary's correspondent that the estate was low-rented, and "that Lord Lansdowne was one of the best landlords in Kerry, of whom it suited some people to talk disparagingly for personal purposes." I do not know if the Archdeacon meant this shaft for the "Nun" or the Rector, or for both. In either case, far be it from me to contradict him.

The successive owners of the Lansdowne property have

been always perfectly aware that no agent can be infallible, and no system of estate management can be perfect. They have therefore never sought to avoid the eye of observers, and have been invariably ready to give every information in their power to those seeking it. They would gladly have afforded it to Mr. Charles Russell, and would have welcomed the impartial criticism of so distinguished a public man, especially at a difficult moment like the present. Unfortunately, as a matter of fact, Mr. Charles Russell not only heard one side only, but also chose as his principal informants those very persons who, to use Archdeacon Higgins' phrase, "had personal purposes;" and they sought him out all the more eagerly, because a foolish report had got about in the neighbourhood that he had come down with special instructions from some mysterious quarter to make a case against Lord Lansdowne, in order to pay him off for his vote and speech on the Disturbance Bill.

This report was of course unfounded; but if I am not justified in believing the idle gossip of Kenmare about Mr. Charles Russell, neither is he justified in believing it about Lord Lansdowne and Mr. Trench. If I am to refuse to believe that the leader of the Northern Circuit could for a moment condescend to sink to the level of a common informer, on the same principle I am entitled to ask Mr. Charles Russell at least to hesitate before accepting all the wild talk and exaggerations of his friends as being the realities of Irish life. Truth is often not more easy to get at along the shores of Kerry than along those of the Bosphorus; and the same unreasonableness which

now causes Irish patriots, so called, to denounce Mr. Gladstone and Mr. Forster, is simply another symptom of that same reckless frame of mind of which the indiscriminate abuse and misrepresentation of the landlords is the habitual sign. I, therefore, regret that Mr. Charles Russell should not have thought fit to use his great abilities in sifting the evidence, after hearing both sides, instead of putting his conscience into the keeping of the "Nun," of the Rector, and Mr. Michael Cronin, the well-known Fenian agent, whose name Mr. Charles Russell, with true skill, entirely suppresses in his letters. Mr. Michael Cronin, I may mention, could have given Mr. Charles Russell far more accurate information as to the interior of Mountjoy Prison than of the office rules of the Lansdowne estate.

Perhaps, however, it is unfair to complain that an eminent lawyer on his autumn trip should, if only out of mere weariness, leave the rules of evidence behind him for domestic consumption, and, like Mr. Wemmick in 'Great Expectations,' have two characters—a Westminster or business character, and a Walworth or holiday character, with different modes of procedure adapted to each. The consequences, however, to those whom Mr. Charles Russell falls upon, when he has donned his Walworth character, are likely, as it would seem, to prove disagreeable.

In regard to the observation alleged by him to have been made to him by the "Nun," to the effect that Mr. Trench had told her that "when he saw the distress coming he told his noble master that it would be the best

thing that had ever happened to the landlords—they would have their tenants at their mercy," I need hardly perhaps point out to any of your readers the *primâ facie* improbability of the story, and the still greater improbability of Mr. Trench having made such a statement to the notoriously hostile "Nun." In any case, I venture to stigmatise the assertion of the "Nun," if it really was made, as a cruel and wicked slander; but I cannot still help hoping that Mr. Charles Russell misunderstood Miss Cusack's words.

One other statement I wish to notice, because it reflects on the memory of my late grandfather. Mr. Charles Russell repeats, as unquestioned truth, the old calumny that the emigration after the great famine was carried out in a barbarous fashion, and that a very large proportion of the emigrants from his property died in "New York Hospital," where a ward in consequence came to be known as the "Lansdowne Ward." I, on the contrary, assert that the emigration was carried out with the utmost efficiency of which the terrible circumstances of the period and the various difficulties of time and place admitted, and that it saved 3,000 people from a miserable end in Ireland. Not one of these, I may mention, had been evicted. They flocked into the already overcrowded workhouse of their own accord, as they were dying of starvation on their miserable holdings, where it was practically impossible to relieve them.

As regards the "Lansdowne Ward," I not long ago asked a friend of mine, who had been connected with the relief of the famine, and since then with emigration and

Poor Law work in England, to inquire carefully while in New York where the hospital was, and whether any such ward existed or had existed in it. He told me on his return that he believed the whole story was an impudent invention got up by Irish politicians for their own purposes. I observe that Mr. Charles Russell, throughout his letters, takes Griffith's valuation as a fair standard for rent. The absurdity of this has been so often and so thoroughly exposed in your columns that I need not allude to it further, beyond noticing that Mr. Charles Russell is obliged to admit, though grudgingly, that, even near Cahirciveen, the estate is not highly rented. Your contemporary correspondent says it is low rented.

Mr. Charles Russell says, *inter alia*, that he found the Kerry peasantry dull and deficient in humour, and his soul was consequently filled with patriotic anguish. Now, a friend of mine tells me that Mr. Charles Russell, though an Irish M.P., is in reality a Scotchman. There is a well-known saying that to make a Scotchman understand a joke you must first perform a surgical operation upon him. I should be sorry if, the next time Mr. Charles Russell visits Kerry, the playful inhabitants should consider it their duty to perform upon him any of the surgical operations now fashionable in Ireland, with a view to making him understand the humour of the country. If they do I feel sure Mr. Trench will do his best to protect him. One of your contemporaries, I may observe, pointed out the other day that perhaps the only redeeming feature in the present gloomy situation in Ireland was that nothing

seemed able to suppress the wit and humour of the people, to whatever class they belonged. My friend Professor Fawcett not long ago made some stay at Kenmare; Mr. Charles Russell can, if he chooses, ask him if he thought the population such very dull people, or considered that they were all groaning and downtrodden under a horrible tyranny.

Mr. Charles Russell further declares that his poorer witnesses exhibited signs of the most abject terror. Small blame to them, I venture to say. What must have been the feelings of these unfortunate people when they found themselves suddenly confronted with the formidable leader of the Northern Circuit, armed with his "note-book," accompanied by an active "shorthand writer," and followed by friends of the "Nun," fresh from her presence, Mr. Michael Cronin, fresh from Mountjoy Prison, and the Home Rule Rector still groaning from the consequences of disestablishment! Who shall blame the Kerry peasant if he shrunk back and at first showed no greater valour than the ancient hero when he saw advancing upon him an equally dire conjunction, "Gorgones, Harpyiœque et forma tricorporis umbræ?"

In one thing I agree with Mr. Charles Russell, viz., that the peasantry of Kerry are poor, though perhaps not so poor as he thinks. I attribute this mainly to the poverty of the soil, the remote character of the district, the bad methods of cultivation, and, near Cahirciveen, to habitual drunkenness. The laws relating to land, no doubt, have also, especially in the past, had something

to do with it, but I think less there than elsewhere, because Lord Lansdowne's property is one of the few in the South of Ireland where the Ulster custom exists, a fact which Mr. Charles Russell slurs over, in the same way that he suppresses the large sums spent on the estate in improvements of a permanent character, and upon schools, since 1845, and upon relief works. Mr. Charles Russell, however, is of opinion that the poverty is all the fault of the landlords, and in this he is not peculiar, for I see in the Irish papers every day that the landlords are to be exterminated. Be it so. When the hour of confiscation arrives I intend to propose that the Barony of Iveragh, about which Mr. Russell is so very eloquent, but whither it does not appear that he went in person, shall, with the corresponding title, be conferred on him for his eminent public services. When he has been in occupation of the Barony a few years, I, Sir, shall ask you to appoint me your Special Correspondent, and if I find that the new law-lord has not made the peasantry of Ireland as rich as Henry IV. wished that of France to be, if he has not caused the boulder-stones of the mountains to grow turnips, and has not turned every sow's ear in Kerry into a silk purse, I shall hold him up to public hatred as a rack-renter, a tyrant, and an exterminator.—I am, Sir, yours obediently,

EDMOND FITZMAURICE.

November 18.

P.S.—I may add that Mr. Charles Russell's assertion that no branches of the Land League exist in Kerry is as accurate as most of his other statements.

LETTER OF MR. RUSSELL.

[*Ante*, pages 131, 133.]

SIR,—I cannot think of asking *de die in diem* for space in your columns to answer the criticisms or the strictures upon my letters of your correspondents. I propose, therefore, to finish the series, as originally sketched by me, without noticing these. Pressure upon my time just now renders necessary a break of a few days. When the series is finished I shall ask your permission to make such answer as is called for, once for all.

I beg, however, to say I shall notice no anonymous letter. The fact that a number of these have lately been permitted to appear in the English press, full of the most serious—not to say calumnious—statements against the Irish people, seems to me to be in the highest degree regrettable. Anonymous letters of all sorts are out of place at this time, whether they contain menaces to landlords and agents, or sweeping, unproved charges against whole classes. Many of those that have appeared unsigned are eminently calculated to excite a rancorous and dangerous feeling in the English mind at a time when more than ever calmness of judgment is needed.

Only two signed letters purporting to challenge the accuracy of any of my statements have up to this time appeared in your columns—I include that in to-day's issue from Lord Edmond Fitzmaurice. I hope I am not doing that noble Lord injustice in treating this letter as authentic. I should certainly have expected, instead of

the laboured levity which marks his communication, to find him exhibiting a spirit of thoughtful seriousness more befitting the occasion.—I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

CHARLES RUSSELL.

TEMPLE, *November* 19.

LETTER OF MR. E. MORROGH BERNARD.

[See *ante*, p. 19, and *post*, p. 144; and for Mr. Russell's reply, *post*, p. 181.]

SIR,—Mr. C. Russell having thought proper to hold up my name to public odium, without first having the courtesy of ascertaining if the "stories" he was about publishing were true, I will thank you to insert a few remarks concerning my dealings with the Iveragh tenants. I conclude the place he visited was "Roads," where I never raised the rents, and where the tenants, on various occasions, have experienced acts of kindness from me, since I became the purchaser a few years ago. The widow Goulden has not been a tenant for the last eleven years, and her son, who was tenant, ran away to America, not to escape his "landlord," but his other creditors. It may surprise Mr. C. Russell to hear, that instead of cursing me she publicly called down blessings upon me and mine in the town of Cahirciveen no later than last month. The improvements on this farm were made, not by the tenant, but by my father, who got the money from the Board of Works.

The rental of the Knocknatubber property is very

much the same now as in the early part of the forties. Instead of the rents being raised different times, there has been only one small rise in my time (since 1866), and every one knows the great increase in the value of farm stock. The charity money Canon Brosnan, the good P.P. of Cahirciveen, applied to the "Roads" mountain farm, could not have been better used, as it kept some miserable under-tenants (not mine) from the workhouse. At one time I tried to get my neighbour to join in putting that road in order, but he refused, and the undertaking was too expensive for me to do alone. Perhaps if Mr. Russell had an Irish property with heavy charges that must be paid he would be glad to get rid of a bad tenant, and he would also become aware of the fact that Griffith's valuation is not the guide for many parts of the country. He may also like to know that leases were offered of thirty-one years, but the tenants refused, with one exception, saying they preferred the old way always best, and would remain yearly tenants. Mr. C. Russell's letters having got wide circulation, I hope the various papers which copied his statements will do me the justice to insert this also.

ED. MORROGH BERNARD.

KILLARNEY, *November* 19.

LETTER OF VERY REV. CANON BROSNAN, P.P., IN ANSWER TO MR. MORROGH BERNARD.

[See *ante*, pages 19, and 142, and *post*, page 181.]

SIR,—The reference made to me by Mr. Morrogh Bernard in his letter published in the *Daily Telegraph* of the 20th inst. obliges me, however reluctantly, to trespass on your space. I would have preferred to continue quietly trying in my own humble way to promote the cause of justice and good-will between landlords and their tenants in my parish. But in times of such intense excitement the public have, I think, special claims to be fully and accurately informed on all issues raised in reference to the Land Question. Mr. Bernard states that the charity money applied by me to the Roads mountain farm road kept some miserable under-tenants "not his" from the workhouse. I beg to say that most of this money went to his own tenants, who of all the other people in the parish were the most miserable, and nearly all of whom, but for this and all the other charities given to them, would, beyond all doubt, have perished. The neighbouring gentleman of whom he complains gave me £10 towards making this road, while he did not subscribe a shilling towards it, nor in any other way towards the relief of the appalling distress.

Mr. Bernard says he did not raise the rents on this farm of Roads, but he omits to mention that they had been enormously raised—aye, actually to more than double their value—by the former unhappy owner. Mr. Bernard

states that these tenants experienced various acts of kindness from him. What will poor John Lynch say to this, who with his large helpless family was cast upon the world because in addition to an impossible rent he could not pay crushing law costs?

The sad and honest truth is that but for the public charities extended to them, not two of Mr. Bernard's twenty or twenty-five tenants at Roads could have paid any rent at all.

With regard to the Knocknatubber rents, Mr. Bernard states they were raised only once in his time, and that by a small increase. Some of them were raised at least twenty-five per cent. by him, and his father had considerably raised them all previously, promising then there should be no further rise.

As for the widow Goulden, who, Mr. Bernard states, called down blessings upon him and his, recently he gave her £3, but, she demanding £3 more for having "made a fool of her" in sending her to Tralee, he promised he would give it to her the next time he came to Cahirciveen. She then said "Safe journey to you, but I will not take my curse off you till I get the other £3." This is the blessing Mr. Bernard boasts of. I am in a position further to state that her son did not fly the country because of his creditors, as alleged by Mr. Bernard, but on account of the excessive law costs imposed upon him, the poor man having in vain made a tender of his full rent the day before he left.—I am, &c.,

T. Canon Brosnan.

Cahirciveen, *November* 21, 1880.

LETTER OF MISS M. F. CUSACK,

In Answer to Lord E. Fitzmaurice.

[Known as the Nun of Kenmare—a Member of the Sisterhood of the Convent of Poor Clares, Kenmare.]

Sir,—I do not know why Lord Fitzmaurice is so anxious to bring me into the controversy between himself and Mr. Russell; I was not even aware that he proposed visiting me until he called at the convent. I could not, therefore, be his principal witness. Facts are his principal witnesses, and Mr. Russell will, no doubt, defend his facts. As no one was present on the occasion of my interview with Mr. Trench, mentioned in Lord Fitzmaurice's letter in your issue of November 19th, I am at a loss to know how any one can be called on to deny the words used except the persons concerned.

I am not "hostile" to Mr. Trench, as Lord Edmond Fitzmaurice states. He does both Mr. Trench and myself injustice in saying so. But I am hostile, and shall always be hostile, to a system which treats the people as serfs, and uses them solely as rent-producing machines. I was not aware that I had any differences with Mr. Trench; he has always treated me with marked personal courtesy, and, if I needed an act of personal kindness to-morrow, I would ask it from him as readily as from any one in Ireland.

Recrimination and personalities are not argument, and can only be used when there is a bad case. It is quite true that Mr. Trench and I differed very widely on the subject of the distress in Kerry. Mr. Trench denied

the distress, and, if he could have prevented it, would not have allowed any relief committee to be formed here. But I have yet to learn that Mr. Trench is personally infallible; he was the only gentleman in or around the Marquis of Lansdowne's estate who denied the distress. His personal friend, and one who also, I believe, shares his peculiar religious views, Mr. Mahoney, J.P., of Dromore, asked to join the relief committee here. As it was through the efforts I made that this committee was enabled to assist the poor here so largely, I wrote to him asking how he could wish to avail himself of the funds I had collected when his friend Mr. Trench so persistently denied the distress. His reply is before me as I write. He said he had not asked to join the committee until he had impoverished himself by assisting his tenants. I repeat again, this letter is addressed to myself, and is in my possession, and I know that in many places landlords and land agents have denied the distress point blank, though their tenants have been fed and clothed by relief committees and saved from starvation. Further, I received a letter of thanks from Mr. O'Connell, J.P., of Derrynane Abbey. Also, I was so pressed by the relief committee here for help that I was almost worn out with correspondence; but when I received earnest appeals from them, there was no more to be said but to try and save the people. I sent also large sums of money to Canon Brosnan, of Cahirciveen, where Mr. Trench is also agent, and received from him the following letter:

"There are upwards of 800 destitute families here. How we are to struggle through the next five or six

months I know not; as for clothing, £800 would not supply the barely necessary want, whilst some 500 children are unfit to appear in school through this want. Dear sister, do all you can to help me in this great work of need and charity.—Praying God to send you more and more, I am yours most truly,

"J. Canon Brosnan."

Irish landlords lost a golden opportunity of securing the affections and devotion of their tenants in the famine year, and I deeply regret that a nobleman like the Marquis of Lansdowne, whose rents are not excessive and whose heart is good—if he will pardon me for saying so—should have missed such an opportunity. How feeding and clothing the poor could increase the distress I am at a loss to imagine. I have no wish for newspaper or any controversy, or I could give details of what was done in that way here and the dire necessity for it.—Your obedient servant,

Sister Mary Francis Clare.
(M. F. Cusack.)

Kenmare, Co. Kerry, *November* 21, 1880.

LETTER OF LADY FITZGERALD.

[See *ante*, p. 33, and *post*, p. 151, and for Mr. Russell's reply, *post*, p. 188.]

Sir,—I have read a letter signed "C. Russell," impugning the character as a landlord of my husband, the late Knight of Kerry. Had this letter come from one of the ordinary agitators I should have passed it by in

scornful silence, but coming as it does from a man of such eminence in his profession, I beg you will allow me to make a few remarks upon it. Mr. Russell visited this island, announcing that he did so to satisfy himself as to the exact facts of the Irish land question for the purpose of legislation.

He says he "desires to speak with reserve," for he adds, "I have not examined it with that fulness I should desire before pronouncing an opinion." He also says that of the management and actions of my husband he would prefer for the present not to speak fully. Nevertheless, though he did not give more than a few hours of one single afternoon to the investigation of such a confessedly difficult subject as the management of a thickly-populated estate (a description of property quite new to him, as he told us), he proceeds to publish a number of half-formed opinions and insinuations of peculation of a most unfounded character, in which I fail to see the "reserve." I regret that his time was so limited that he could not remain longer on the island when invited to do so, for every facility for examination into my husband's plans of management would have been gladly given to him, and by so doing he would have been able in a very short time to correct the first impression produced by a scene so new to him, and to have arrived at the exact facts which it was the avowed object of his visit to obtain.

I must leave it to one of my younger sons, who now acts as agent for the estate, to reply in detail to the charges Mr. Russell has published; but with regard to

his assertion that "no improvement had been made by the landlord at his own cost," I would wish to say that he would have found on examination that in point of fact the whole rental of the estate for many years past has been spent in labour on the island, and that during the last general distress, in preference to giving free food, he offered and gave employment to every man on his estate who applied for it. Mr. Russell takes occasion to say, "I ought to add that the present Knight seems personally popular—of him sanguine expectations are formed." I am glad that my son, now in India with his regiment, is spared for a few weeks the pain of reading this reserved slur on his father. I am thankful to say that his highest ambition is to follow in his steps, and all true friends of Ireland who knew him will agree that he could not have a brighter example.

Mr. Russell further remarks "his is not a thriving tenantry, or such as a landlord can look upon with pride or satisfaction." My husband may have been more easily pleased than Mr. Russell, for he certainly did feel a considerable amount of pride and satisfaction in very many of his tenants, whom he had watched and encouraged from their boyhood up, and whom he looked on as personal friends, and who always came to him for advice and help in their difficulties.

The only way to arrive at a just conclusion as to improvement is by comparing the present with the past, and to those who remember this country forty years ago, the change for the better is obvious enough.

I fear I am intruding too much on your space, but

I cannot but be intensely moved, knowing, as I do, how for forty years my husband's earnest and ceaseless effort was to promote in every way the interest of Ireland, to see how such efforts can be so misrepresented by a flying visitor.—I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

JULIA M. FITZGERALD.

LETTER OF MR. R. FITZGERALD.

[See *ante*, p. 33, and *post*, p. 155, and for Mr. Russell's reply *post*, p. 188.]

SIR,—Mr. Russell, in his letter, "New Views on Ireland," which appeared in your issue of the 12th inst., commences by stating that he "wishes to speak with reserve of my brother's property, not having examined it with that fulness it deserves," and goes on to make certain statements which, with your permission, I will correct. Perhaps Mr. Russell will be surprised to hear (I am sure the readers of his letter will) that if rents were now fixed on the basis of Griffith's valuation *in accordance with the rise in prices since the valuation was made*, with a moderate allowance of per-centage on improvements, the rental of my brother's property would exceed the present rental by more than fifty per cent. As it is, after deducting interest on improvements effected by my father, partly out of his income and partly by money borrowed from the Board of Works on the security of his estate, and not taking any account of the rise in prices,

the rental of Valentia does not in the aggregate exceed the valuation by 25 per cent.

Mr. Russell says, "here and there" may be seen marked improvements. Does this convey (what is the fact) that since my father purchased this property, new houses have been built on about one-fourth of the farms, and a still larger proportion of farmhouses and cottages repaired in a substantial manner, and re-roofed with slate, and also that he spent a large proportion of his income in various other improvements, contrary to Mr. Russell's assertion that he made no improvements at his own cost? Has Mr. Russell's experience taught him that landlords in England, Scotland, or any other country, when they lay out money, for which, however obtained, they must give the security of their estates, exact, either directly or indirectly, no increased rent for their land? Do they make this expenditure a perfectly free gift, and take no account of it in calculating the letting value of their farms?

Mr. Russell alleges that my father contributed nothing to the relief funds. Such a statement was made before and withdrawn, and I am much mistaken if one of those who accompanied Mr. Russell was not well aware of this fact. My father, it is true, did not send a contribution of money to the relief committee; but, what was far better, he undertook to give, and did give, employment to every man on his property who was willing to work.

Mr. Russell states that my father "did supply seed potatoes to some of his tenants at market price, and in some instances below market price," the fact being that he had procured an amply supply of champion potatoes direct

from Scotland, which he offered to those of his larger tenants who had not already supplied themselves, at two-thirds of market price, and to his smaller tenants (and that by far the greater number) at one-third, half, and two-thirds of cost price, not "at market prices," as Mr. Russell says. The relief committee undoubtedly did their work well, but I will leave it to your readers to judge how far £1200 could have gone towards supporting during the winter the inhabitants of Valentia, considerably over 2000 in number, even after deducting (according to Mr. Russell) the twenty self-supporting tenants and their families.

Mr. Russell says that "everywhere on the property there was great bitterness at certain exactions which had latterly been imposed on the tenants in addition to their rent, and which formed no inconsiderable increase to the burdens already sufficiently great on their miserable holdings." Perhaps you will allow me to explain. Many years ago there were endless disputes in the obtaining of sand and seaweed on two small strands on the northern side of the island, which could not be well allotted to particular farms, as is the case with the remainder, by far the largest part of the foreshore.

Finding that in the general struggle which ensued, the weaker tenants did not get their fair share, and that strangers were encroaching on these privileges, my father, whose right to do so had been duly recognised by Government, for police purposes directed that any tenant desirous of obtaining seaweed at these particular strands should pay for a ticket enabling him at any time during the current year to take the greatest available quantity of

seaweed for the sum of 2*s.* 6*d.* per annum, and a like rate for sand, and that the amount realised by the proceeds of these tickets, about £12 per annum, should go to defray the expenses incurred, and that the balance, if any, should be devoted to charitable purposes. Mr. Russell received a full explanation of this when on the spot, and should have remembered it. We must plead guilty to having, for the protection of the property, imposed a charge of 1*s.* for the right of obtaining as much heather, &c. (used as litter for cattle), as one man could with a scythe cut in a day, not "carry on his back," according to Mr. Russell.

The increase of income realised thereby has for the last four years been on an average 12*s.* per annum, not a very serious "exaction," I should say. The unreclaimed land that was let to tenants could have been more profitably used for grazing, but in order to ease the overcrowded districts a large portion of land was fenced, drained, and, with stated cottages built thereon, was let to tenants at a nominal rent for a certain number of years (seven and upwards), when it was calculated they would have procured a liberal return for their labour, after which, according to previous arrangement, there was to be a moderate rise of rent during the remainder of the term of generally 31 years. It might have been more satisfactory for the landlord if (as doing in some cases) he had let the land at a high rent and paid the tenants for their improvements, but the result would have been the same.

I have in the above endeavoured simply to lay before the public, in justice to the memory of my father, the true state of the case, and, unwilling to trespass on your indul-

gence, have abstained from expressing an opinion on the tone of Mr. Russell's letter.—I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

R. FITZGERALD.

VALENTIA, *November* 23.

REPORT OF A LOCAL COMMITTEE APPOINTED TO ENQUIRE INTO THE TRUTH OF MR. RUSSELL'S ALLEGATIONS RELATING TO THE KNIGHT OF KERRY'S PROPERTY IN VALENTIA.

THIS Report is copied from the *Freeman's Journal*, Dublin. Its substance appeared also in the *Daily Telegraph*, and in other papers:

"A large and representative meeting of the Iveragh branch of the Land League was held here to-day, Canon Brosnan, P.P., President, in the chair. The others present were—Rev. Thomas Lawlor, P.P., Valencia, Vice-President; Mr. P. Roche, Hon. Sec., neighbouring clergymen, representatives of the League from each of the surrounding parishes, together with many tenant-farmers and shopkeepers.

"The Very Rev. Chairman commenced by saying how much the farmers of Ireland, and especially those of Iveragh, were indebted to Mr. Russell, whose able letters let such a flood of light into the dealings of landlords with their tenantry, and had the effect of enlightening English public opinion. Some of the landlords, as was natural, strove to impugn the accuracy of Mr. Russell's statements, and it was their duty to defend him as far as truth and

justice permitted. He (the Canon) had not waited for this meeting to rebut the false statements made by the landlords in his own parish, but had written himself to the papers. He understood that Mr. R. Fitzgerald's letter which appeared a few days ago was one which required an immediate answer. He considered the best plan would be if the representatives from the island and a few men from the town who knew all the facts consulted together, and then he should lay their answer before this meeting, and send it forth stamped with its approval. The following is the Report:—

'We find the statements of Mr. C. Russell regarding the Knight of Kerry's property to be substantially correct, and the letter of Mr. R. Fitzgerald in reply to be inaccurate and misleading.

'1. Mr. Fitzgerald says his father undertook to give, and did give, employment to every man on his property who was willing to work. No; he offered employment to labourers on his property, but excluded small tenant-farmers who wanted it as much, and who up to that year were accustomed to earn their rents by labour. The weather was so severe, people were so badly fed and clad, and prices given for contract work were so low, that not many availed of the employment. The tenants for whom the work was done are charged at the rate of £5 per cent. with no promise of its being ever taken off, while Government loans were to be had at the same time at more favourable and terminable terms of £3 8*s.* 6*d.*

'2. Mr. Fitzgerald states that his father offered champion seed potatoes to his larger tenants at two-thirds of market price. No; he offered them at 1*s.* 6*d.* at weight 1½ stone, the price paid by himself, and which was then the market price at this neighbouring town of Cahirciveen. Many of those larger tenants, through inability

to pay, though knowing the value of champions for seed purposes, or other causes, did not purchase any.

"3. Mr. Fitzgerald would lead the public to infer that his father's tenants were holding their lands at 25 per cent. only over Griffith's valuation, for he says the rental of Valentia does not in the aggregate exceed the valuation by 25 per cent. Whatever his process of reasoning may be, the broad fact as stated by Mr. Russell remains that the tenants on the estate as a rule pay nearly twice Griffith's valuation. We subjoin a typical case. The tenants on the townland of Ballyherney were paying the late Sir James O'Connell, who held as middleman from the Knight of Kerry, one and a half Griffith's valuation. Can Mr. Fitzgerald deny that when the farms on this townland were readjusted, his father did raise the rent, exclusive of percentage on buildings and drainage, &c., to nearly twice Griffith's valuation? The tenants on the other townlands state the same rule holds in their regard.

'4. The most curious part of Mr. R. Fitzgerald's letter is his explanation of a tax of 2*s.* 6*d.* for seaweed and 2*s.* 6*d.* for sand, which the people were accustomed to take from the public strand, and which you should suppose an improving landlord would be anxious to see his tenants take in large quantities. The majority now go to the mainland by boat for seaweed and sand, which they get without any payment. Mr. Fitzgerald's statement goes to say that his father placed two gates on the public highway for police purposes, and that the proceeds of the tax are given for charity. The people assert there was never any need of police, nor did they ever hear of any squabbles (except on one occasion with the Knight's steward when these rules came into operation) on any of the strands claimed as his own by the Knight, and they much prefer to live like men and not to be yearly objects of charity.

'The fact is, when the College lands were taken off his hands the Knight charged each of the Trinity College

tenants 30*s.* for their right to the strand, and when this did not pay he reduced it to 10*s.* and finally to 4*s.* This looks like financial and not police business, and it is not surprising, as Mr. Russell truly states, that the poor tenants, whose burdens are already sufficiently great, should bitterly complain.' "

LETTER OF THE MARQUIS OF LANSDOWNE.

[See *ante*, pp. 43 *et seq.*, and for Mr. Russell's reply, *post*, p. 189. See also "Declaration of the Marquis of Lansdowne's Tenants in Iveragh," *post*, p. 171. See also important article from the *Cork Examiner*, p. 172, *post*.]

SIR,—Evidence with regard to the management of my Kerry estate was yesterday given before the Royal Commission by Mr. Trench and by myself. Some time, however, must necessarily elapse before that evidence is in the hands of the public; and there are, in the meanwhile, one or two points in Mr. Russell's letters which require a few words of explanation from me.

Mr. Russell expresses a fear that the landlords of Ireland may be making "a profit from their tenants out of the public funds lent for land improvement." He apparently believes that he has found on my estate the solitary instance upon which he relies for the establishment of this proposition. I hear Mr. Russell has been told I obtained from the State £6000, on which I shall have to pay a rent-charge of £3 8*s.* 6*d.* per cent., while I have charged my tenants £5 per cent. for the use of the money. The facts of the case are as follows:

During the year 1879 I obtained from the Board of

Works two loans, one of £1525, the other of £5000. Applied for in the months of January and September, respectively, each of these loans was made upon the then usual terms, and was repayable by a rent-charge of 6½ per cent. I offered this money to my tenants at 5 per cent., and undertook to charge them no interest for the first three years. Many of them applied for work upon these terms, and during the winter months several hundred men were thus employed. Every tenant before commencing work signed a printed form of agreement, binding himself to pay 5 per cent. upon the sums paid to him from time to time as the work progressed.

On Jan. 12, 1880, a notice was issued by the Board of Works, stating that drainage loans would be offered to landlords, repayable by a rent-charge of £3 8*s.* 6*d.* per cent., no interest to be chargeable for the first two years, and it was explained that these terms would refer to loans applied for subsequent to Nov. 22, 1879. Both of my loans had been applied for prior to that date, and, therefore, did not come within the scope of the circular. I was, however, informed by the Board towards the end of the month that the loan of £5000, which had been approved by the Commissioners on Dec. 27, should have the advantage of the new terms, and almost immediately afterwards further loans of £3000 and £5000 were applied for by me to be expended upon the same townlands as the earlier loans. The total expenditure under these four loans has been £5424.

The bargain between the State and the landlord having been amended, a corresponding revision of that between

the landlord and the tenants became necessary; but that revision, however, was called for, not only in respect of future advances, but in respect of those which had been already made; for out of a total of 290 agreements 263 had been signed by the tenants before the end of February. Some of the tenants, moreover, had commenced work under the old terms, and were finishing it under the new, and much of the work taken in hand was not yet completed, or passed by the inspector. It appeared to me, under these circumstances, that the adjustment of the account must necessarily be deferred until the work had been finished and certified by the inspector of the Board (no charge was in any case to be made to the tenants for three years). When I have received from the Commissioners a statement of the rent-charge due by me it will be apportioned in accordance with that statement among the tenants. Upon money advanced to me at 6½ per cent., the tenants will pay me 5 per cent. Upon that advanced at £3 8*s*. 6*d*., they will not pay more than £3 8*s*. 6*d*.

Some of Mr. Russell's informants appear to have laid stress upon the fact that no engagement was given to the tenants to the effect that the rent-charge payable by them should terminate with that payable by the landlord. Upon this point I will only observe that it is impossible to determine beforehand the length of time during which the land will be benefited by drainage, and that, as the rent-charge payable by me, or my successors, will not terminate until the year 1917 A.D., the amount of rent which, when that time comes, will be payable by the tenants, and which must depend upon the then circum-

stances of their holdings, is scarcely a matter for present consideration.

With regard to the sale of lime to the tenants, I have to make the following observations. It is untrue to state that they have been obliged to buy their lime at my kiln. They found that they could obtain it there cheaper and better than they could from their own kilns, and they ceased using the latter of their own accord. The price charged per barrel has varied from time to time. That recently charged is, it must be borne in mind, uniform over the entire estate, to parts of which the lime has to be conveyed by water at considerable risk and expense.

The only other point which I will notice in this letter is Mr. Russell's statement that upon the Iveragh portion of the estate the "rents have been increased three times within the past twenty-five years." This statement is absolutely misleading. Mr. Russell supports it by quoting several anonymous cases, in which he was told by the tenants that their rents had been repeatedly increased. I have identified most of these, and satisfied myself as to the incorrectness of Mr. Russell's conclusions. The untrustworthiness of the figures upon which he has founded them has been well illustrated by your correspondent, Mr. T. Cooke Trench, in his letter of the 20th inst. I may observe that the Iveragh rental was in 1850, £3103; in 1860, £2908; in 1870, £2956; in 1880 (allowing for half the county cess, now paid by the landlord), £3377. The increase of rent which took place in 1875 was, I believe, a perfectly reasonable one.

I note with satisfaction Mr. Russell's admission that the appearance of the tenant's dwellings "presents a marked improvement upon those on neighbouring estates," and that the rents "are not the highest." They do not, he says, generally "exceed the valuation by more than 50 per cent.—not always so much." As a matter of fact, the Kenmare estate, to which the above quotation refers, is let, on an average, at 27 per cent., and the Iveragh estate, to which reference has just been made, at 44 per cent., over Griffith's valuation. The rental of the whole estate was, in 1859, £10,035, and in 1878, £11,800. £28,000 have been spent by me or my predecessors on permanent improvements between the two dates.

I hope Mr. Russell will excuse me if I decline to accept his conclusion that "everywhere the feeling is that the rent is more than they (the tenants) can pay, living in the barest fashion," nor can I accept the statement of ways and means submitted to him by an informant, whose name he does not give, and published by him without question in his letter of the 12th. His witness has, I venture to think, proved a little too much. His valuation is £17, his rent £23, and he farms at an annual loss of £30. It is obvious that should this man's statements be worthy of credence he would lose £24 a-year if he held his farm at Griffith's valuation (the terms proposed by the Land League), and that he would be out of pocket to the extent of £13 even if his farm were held-rent free. If this is a fair specimen of the solvency of an Irish tenant, who is described by Mr. Russell as "seeming much better off than the rest" on an estate where the rents are "not

the highest," we may indeed despair of a satisfactory solution of the Irish problem. Your readers will no doubt observe that this witness explained his ability to "live" by the fact that he "married a fortune of £100." It is not the least puzzling circumstance connected with this question that such fortunes are frequently given to their daughters by men who will demonstrate to any unsuspecting interrogator that their farming operations cannot result otherwise than in an annual loss.

For the facts with regard to the "hanging year" and other matters dwelt upon by Mr. Russell, I must refer him and your readers to my evidence and Mr. Trench's. I should perhaps add that when Mr. Russell visited my estate he did not visit that portion of it, a district of some 30,000 acres, upon which I reside. I append to this letter a copy of one which I have received from Mr. Trench, and I have the honour to be, Sir, your obedient servant, LANSDOWNE.

LETTER OF MR. TRENCH, REFERRED TO BY THE MARQUIS OF LANSDOWNE IN THE PRECEDING LETTER.

MY LORD,—In Mr. Russell's letter of the 12th instant he says that "the Nun of Kenmare, in her printed expression of thanks to America for the funds entrusted to her for relieving the distressed tenantry, says, under the date of Easter week, 1880: "One land-agent said to me that when he saw the distress coming he told his noble master that it would be the best thing that had ever happened to the landlords; they would have the tenants at their

mercy." To this Mr. Russell adds: "It can hardly be doubted to whom this language refers." As the above statements are obviously intended to refer to me, I beg to state that in conversation with Miss Cusack or any other person I never used the words attributed to me, or any words capable of such an interpretation.—I have the honour to remain, your Lordship's obedient servant,

T. Townsend Trench.

To the Marquis of Lansdowne.

FURTHER LETTER OF THE MARQUIS OF LANSDOWNE.

Sir,—In the third paragraph of my letter published in Saturday's *Daily Telegraph*, it is stated that "out of a total of 290 agreements 263 had been signed by the tenants before the end of February." I should have said that out of a total of 290 agreements 242 had been signed before the end of January.—I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

Lansdowne.

Barons Court, Ireland, *Nov.* 28.

LETTER OF VERY REV. CANON BROSNAN, P.P.,

IN ANSWER TO THE MARQUIS OF LANDSDOWNE. IT APPEARED IN THE *Freeman's Journal*. IT WAS ORIGINALLY ADDRESSED TO THE *Daily Telegraph*, BUT THAT JOURNAL WAS UNABLE TO MAKE ROOM FOR ITS INSERTION.

Sir,—Having from a painful sense of duty animadverted on some replies made in your columns to Mr.

Charles Russell's letters, it would be scarcely fair to pass over others, though I would willingly have done so but for pressing necessities of the hour. The Marquis of Lansdowne, in his letter published in last Saturday's *Telegraph*, states that the rental shows that his Iveragh estate is let on an average of 44 per cent. over Griffith's valuation.

His lordship does not here add whether this is exclusive of one-half of the county cess, which had been paid by him since 1875, but it seems inferrable from a previous paragraph in his letter. Assuming it is so, I beg to submit a full Schedule of the rents and valuation respectively of all his lordship's Iveragh tenantry in my parish, by which it will be seen that while the total valuation is only £731, the rent is £1199, or 64 per cent. above the valuation: deducting 1*s.* 7*d.* in the pound on the valuation for half county cess, the average here for the last five years, and which is equivalent to 8 per cent. on this rental, the excess of rent over valuation is 56 per cent., and not 44, as set down by his lordship.

On examining the lists it will be seen that in very many cases the rent is nearly double the valuation, whilst in many others the excess is 75 per cent. The rise of 25 per cent. put on the Iveragh tenants in 1875 by his lordship was found in several instances to be so excessively high that reductions had to be made, which account for the difference as regards these holdings.

Lord Lansdowne is, I fear, misleading in his decennial tables of his Iveragh rentals. He commences with 1850. It was soon after that year, owing to the exhausted and

depopulated condition of the estate, that the rents were reduced to the Government valuation, and in some cases below it.

Since then the enormous increase shown in the Schedule has been made without any reduction whatever. Lord Lansdowne is pleased to tell us that the last increase of 25 per cent. put on by him on the Iveragh tenants "is perfectly reasonable." If so, why was it not put on the Kenmare tenants, who could bear it better? In the latter district his lordship deemed it prudent to adopt the silent system of rises; why is it that the *per saltum* plan was applied to unfortunate Iveragh?

From Lord Lansdowne's letter it would appear that until the year 1917 A.D. his tenants may be left in ignorance as to whether the charge on them of 5 per cent. for Government drainage money shall then cease, or whether they will have to continue to pay it *in secula seculorum.* I trust that the account will not be left in this unsatisfactory way; for notwithstanding that Lord Lansdowne's letter to me from Scotland dated November 22, 1879, stated that the charge was to be permanent, I was glad to learn from Lord Edmond Fitzmaurice's letter that the Marquis had now taken the matter into his consideration.

I am also glad to find, although I learn it now for the first time, the tenants will not have to pay more than the terminable £3 8*s.* 6*d.* per cent. for the money borrowed under the Irish Distress Act. Several particular and individual cases of serious complaints by Lord Lansdowne's Cahirciveen tenants lie before me, and not referred

to by Mr. Russell. Some are given in the proof-sheets of the Irish Land Commission at No. 25,693, more from another witness, No. 25,826, and also in the evidence given by myself, No. 25,591 of the same Report.

Lord Edmond Fitzmaurice in his letter in your issue of the 17th inst. charges his noble brother's Cahirciveen tenants with "habitual drunkenness." Does the young gentleman say so of his own knowledge, and, if not so, who is his authority? I have been for the last eighteen months in this parish, and I must positively declare that this very grave accusation is unfounded.

Some months ago, when Mr. Trench, Lord Lansdowne's agent, in his office in Kenmare, imputed this crime, not for the first time, I on the spot challenged him to come to Cahirciveen in the evening of any fair day he chose, when he could see with his own eyes the truth, or rather falsehood, of the charge. This he has not done, preferring rather to vilify my flock.

Lord Edmond further sets Archdeacon Higgins' authority against Sister Mary Frances Clare and others in the matter of the management of the Lansdowne estate, but he omits saying that Archdeacon Higgins' immediate predecessor, Archdeacon O'Sullivan, and others also of the Kenmare clergy, had openly and persistently condemned that management. Sir, as to Mr. Russell's letters describing the condition of the tenants in this district, I ask permission to say one word. I do not know Mr. Russell personally. Unfortunately I was away from home (in England) at the time of his visit, and hence I had not an opportunity of pointing out to him many

things which I should have felt bound to call his attention to, but I can safely testify that so far from having exaggerated he has understated the suffering and grievances of the tenantry in this district, and that there are several other properties around here whose tenants have been quite as badly treated by their landlords as those tenants whose condition Mr. Russell has described.

I further most respectfully beg of the people of England to weigh well the weighty words of wisdom and counsel which the honourable and learned gentleman has so ably put forth in his last letter in your columns.—I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

T. Canon Brosnan.

Cahirciveen, *Dec.* 1, 1880.

The following is the Schedule above referred to:

Tenants.	Gov. Value. £	s.	d.		Yearly Rent. £	s.	d.
Timothy Bowler	7	18	0	.....	12	0	0
Batt Shea	6	8	0	.....	9	15	0
Patrick Murphy	14	1	0	.....	21	16	0
Jeremiah Shea	11	10	0	.....	23	16	0
Patrick Kavane.....	10	18	0	.....	16	0	0
Michael Bowler, jun.	8	17	0	.....	15	0	0
Honoria Bowler.....	5	6	0	.....	9	7	0
Michael Bowler.....	10	10	0	.....	18	2	0
John Shea	10	7	0	.....	18	10	0
John Leyne	14	11	0	.....	21	4	0
Patrick Sullivan	7	3	0	.....	11	16	0
Timothy Sullivan.....	5	3	0	.....	8	3	0
Michael Sullivan	6	8	0	.....	10	14	0
Cornelius Shea	9	10	0	.....	16	0	0
Charles Sanders	4	15	0	.....	8	10	0
Batt Riorden.....	7	10	0	.....	12	14	0
Carried forward.....	£140	15	0		£233	7	0

Tenants.	Gov. Value. £	s.	d.	Yearly Rent. £	s.	d.
Brought forward	140	15	0	233	7	0
Patrick Sullivan	33	0	0	55	7	0
Wm. Cournane	5	5	0	7	0	0
Rens Patrick Neill	10	15	0	17	0	0
Daniel Cournane	14	0	0	21	0	0
John Sullivan	25	0	0	42	10	0
Peter Garvey.....	5	2	0	8	14	0
John Sullivan	4	17	0	8	15	0
John Foley.....	7	12	0	13	2	0
John Ducy	5	2	0	8	14	0
Daniel Golden	4	16	0	8	16	0
Ellen Golden.....	7	9	0	13	2	0
Daniel Shea.....	2	9	0	4	6	0
Daniel Sullivan.....	4	12	0	8	0	0
John D. Shea.....	3	8	0	6	0	0
Cornelius Coffey	3	11	0	6	0	0
John Shea	1	1	0	2	0	0
John Garvey	6	2	0	10	5	0
Connell O'Connell.....	8	15	0	12	10	0
Catherine Coffey	16	10	0	30	12	0
William Potts	10	1	0	17	10	0
Maurice Moriarty	9	5	0	16	5	0
Thomas Sullivan	12	3	0	20	0	0
Denis Sullivan	5	18	0	10	0	0
Daniel Corcoran	7	12	0	14	0	0
Patrick Corcoran	4	17	0	10	0	0
Denis Currane	4	12	0	8	2	0
John Fitzgerald.....	2	1	0	3	14	0
John Herlehy	1	14	0	3	0	0
Daniel Garvey	2	13	0	3	4	0
Timothy Sugrue	8	8	0	14	5	0
John Coffey	10	15	0	17	4	0
Elizabeth Kelly.....	4	12	0	7	10	0
Michael O'Connell	10	0	0	16	14	0
Jeremiah Courtynane	6	15	0	10	0	0
Timothy D. O'Shea	11	5	0	18	10	0
Denis B. O'Sullivan	7	10	0	12	10	0
Patrick Daly	9	5	0	17	0	0
Carried forward.....	£268	5	0	£736	8	0

Tenants.	Gov. Value. £	s.	d.	Yearly Rent. £	s.	d.
Brought forward	268	5	0	736	8	0
Jeremiah Keating.....	12	0	0	18	6	0
Thomas Shea.....	10	5	0	16	10	0
Timothy J. Shea	9	15	0	14	4	0
John T. Shea.....	8	10	0	14	6	0
Denis O'Sullivan	8	0	0	13	2	0
Maurice Regan	10	5	0	16	4	0
John Mahony.....	11	15	0	13	2	0
Patrick Shea	12	5	0	18	0	0
Jeremiah Connor	7	5	0	12	0	0
John Buckley.....	7	5	0	12	0	0
Deborah Shea (widow).....	7	5	0	12	0	0
Daniel Mangan.....	17	15	0	27	0	0
Denis Foley	8	0	0	13	4	0
John Sheehan	7	0	0	11	4	0
Cornelius Shea	12	15	0	20	0	0
John Mangan	14	5	0	18	18	0
Daniel Shea	15	10	0	27	0	0
John Shehan	11	15	0	19	15	0
Patrick Keating.....	11	15	0	20	0	0
Jeremiah Keating.....	17	0	0	28	10	0
Ellen Shea (widow).....	14	15	0	24	14	0
Patrick Sullivan	8	0	0	14	0	0
Daniel Golden	13	12	0	21	8	0
James Shea	4	1	0	6	16	0
Humphrey O'Connor	8	10	0	13	0	0
Patrick Sullivan	6	0	0	10	4	0
Michael Murphy	6	0	0	10	4	0
James Griffin.....	10	10	0	17	4	0
	£731	0	0	£1199	3	0
Deduct 1*s.* 7*d.* in the pound county cess on valuation				57	17	5
Net Rental.....				£1141	5	7

Being 56 per cent. above Government valuation, after deducting half county cess payable by landlord, or 64 per cent. without such valuation.

DECLARATION SIGNED BY 81 OF THE MARQUIS OF LANSDOWNE'S TENANTS IN IVERAGH.

THE fact of this declaration having been signed was mentioned in the *Daily Telegraph* and many other Papers:—

"We, the undersigned tenants of the Iveragh estate of the Marquis of Lansdowne, having seen a letter of his lordship's in the *Daily Telegraph*, in which he states that the description given by Charles Russell, Q.C., M.P., of the increase of rent imposed on the tenants of this estate is absolutely misleading, do hereby declare that Mr. Russell's statement is accurate, and does truly represent the history of this estate for the past 30 years."

Here follow the signatures of 81 tenants.

Saturday, Dec. 4.

ARTICLE FROM *CORK EXAMINER* NEWSPAPER OF NOV. 22, 1880, RELATING TO THE LANSDOWNE ESTATES IN KERRY.

MR. RUSSELL begs attention to this article, not for its ability—though that is remarkable—but because it shows that twenty years ago the same grievances existed on this estate which now find voice in his Letters, and that although care was taken that they should be brought to the notice of the then Marquis, they remain to this day unredressed. The writer is the gentleman who, twenty years ago, personally enquired into the condition of Lord Lansdowne's tenants. At that time Mr. J. F. Maguire, M.P. —many years in the House of Commons—was the pro-

prietor of the *Examiner*. Few readers will require to be told that the *Cork Examiner* is the leading paper in the South of Ireland.

[ARTICLE.]

A brother of the Marquis of Lansdowne has rushed into print to defend the management of the Kerry estates of his lordship against the statements made by Mr. Charles Russell, M.P. His made of doing so is rather clumsy. There is a good deal of heavy pleasantry, and there is a great deal of very bold but very general denial. He makes one mistake in treating Mr. Russell as if he went down to Kerry with the special purpose of assailing the Lansdowne estates in particular. He seems to forget that Mr. Russell's purpose was the investigation of that county as a distressed district, and to make himself acquainted with the bearings of that distress upon the land question. It was impossible he could avoid the Lansdowne estates if he were to deal at all effectively with the subject, because they are of enormous extent, because they present very remarkable contrasts between the wealth of the owner and the misery of the tenantry, and because they happen to be notorious, in Kerry especially, but far outside it also, for some characteristics painfully illustrative of the present relations of landlord and tenant. Lord Edmond shows abundant zeal as a defender, and his dislike and resentment towards Mr. Russell are made manifest enough, while his denials are of a very vigorous character, but they lack the important element of particularity. He is not a discreet writer or a writer of good taste, otherwise he would have avoided an ugly pit into which his animosity against Mr. Russell has led him. It will be perceived that he winds up his diatribe with a jeer about "making the boulder-stones of the mountains to grow turnips." Does it not strike this young gentleman that his noble brother

is revelling in the receipt of a huge income drawn from these boulder-stones, whether they grow turnips or not?

He makes a point of the fact that the Marquis, his brother, was examined before the Royal Agricultural Commission with reference to this estate. If any one supposes that that examination brought out the whole truth he must be very simple-minded indeed. In the first place, his lordship was not cross-examined; in the next place, even if he were, he could only speak from his knowledge. How much was that? Since he came of age he was once seen upon the Iveragh property! He is more frequently at the Southern side where his lodge is situated, but how much of the time he spends there is given to looking into such particulars as those which are now complained of? It may be a curious thing to say, but we have not the smallest doubt that Mr. Charles Russell, M.P. for Dundalk, and "leader of the Northern Circuit," as Lord Edmond describes him, knows now a great deal more about the management of the Lansdowne estates than the Marquis of Lansdowne does.

Of this we have reason to be convinced. Lord Edmond asserts that Mr. Russell's only, or principal, witnesses are the Nun of Kenmare, the Home Rule Protestant Rector, Mr. M'Cutcheon, and Mr. Michael Cronin, on whose imprisonment in Mountjoy he is very sarcastic.

We beg to offer one other witness, the present writer, who went over the ground trodden by Mr. Russell before the Nun of Kenmare had lent the lustre of her name to the convent of that town, before the Home Rule movement had enlisted Mr. M'Cutcheon's sympathies, and before a Fenian movement had arisen to render Mr. Cronin liable for imprisonment as a suspect.

More than twenty years ago this writer made himself acquainted with, and published in full detail in the columns of the *Examiner*, a statement of things which shows how little change there has taken place since then in the animating spirit of the management of the Lansdowne estate. Then, as now, the investigation found

the tenantry of the Liberal Marquis of Lansdowne not only poor—a thing which with Irish tenants is not so hard to bear—but mere serfs. He found the "office" spoken of with fear and trembling. He had under his eyes the evidence that it was the abode of a complete despotism, which dispensed licenses to marry, and which inflicted fines for offences against the "rules of the estate." Like Mr. Russell, he was aware that there was over every tenant what he ventured to call "literally a hanging year." He knew that from father to son it descended—like original sin, one is tempted to say. All, or nearly all, the tenants were liable for that debt, which most of them had never contracted, and which left them bound hand and foot, and absolutely at the mercy of the authority which ruled the estate. The old witness to the condition of things in his time was aware of the issue of the mandate by the bailiff to bring more money next gale day, in order that the tenants might be prepared to pay the augmented rent, which was about to be imposed on them as an Eastern Pasha might levy a new tax.

These things were stated with as much fulness of detail as Mr. Russell gives now. The papers containing these statements were duly sent to the noble owner, the then Marquis, in order that he might be fully cognizant of what was said about the condition of the property from which he condescended to receive a vast income. But no reply, either by his lordship or any one else, was vouchsafed. The voice of complaint was passed by in silent contempt. We are fallen upon different times. The present Marquis does not reply, but his brother does. He finds it necessary to appear before the bar of public opinion, and answer something, whether right or wrong, for the way in which control is exercised over the destinies of the thousands who are so abjectly dependent on the way in which his estate is managed. That is a change, indeed, auguring, we hope, of the good time coming, when the Irish tenant shall be not only a prosperous but a free man.

We are bound to say that our knowledge of the Lans-

downe estate since has presented us with some items *per contra* which show more pleasantly than those that we were first compelled to publish in reference to it. Under its auspices there was the encouragement given to good cultivation which is afforded by cattle and root shows; there were prizes bestowed for superior cultivation and management of farms; there was an attempt to establish a butter market in the town of Kenmare; there was, we believe, assistance given in some instances towards the erection of a better class of dwellings. But all these things were only varnishing a rotten surface. What use is it to attempt to stimulate improvement if by-and-bye the man who improves feels that he will be compelled to part with all he may gain by it, and perhaps more for the benefit of the landlord? What, in short, is the chance of infusing energy and thrift into a population held in a condition of absolute dependence, and who are reminded, even though at considerable intervals, by a rise of rent, how, like the objects cited by Virgil, they toil, but not for their own advantage? Despite the superficial amendment of matters, it seems to us evident from the letters of Mr. Russell that now, as in the days when the present writer traversed the Lansdowne estates from Bonane to Tuosist, and from Cahirciveen to Ballinskelligs, the tenantry are left in that condition of servile dependence which all experience has shown is fatal to prosperity.

LETTER OF REV. THOMAS LAWLOR, P.P., IN REFERENCE TO TRINITY COLLEGE ESTATE.

[*Ante*, p. 24, and *post*, p. 203.]

Sir,—The Provost and Fellows of Trinity College have endeavoured to answer the caustic strictures of Mr. Charles Russell, Q.C., M.P., in a bulky pamphlet of twenty-three pages. Being well acquainted with the

deplorable state of things on the portion of their property situate in this island, I can fearlessly affirm that their answer as regards this island misleads the public, and is grossly unjust to the people. At p. 5 they say: "When the middleman's lease expired in 1865, it became the duty of the College to attempt a complete reform. This, however, could only be done either by the eviction of nearly the entire population, or by an effort to induce an improvement in their condition, and in their inveterate habits of indolence and improvidence."

To show how unjust this charge of indolence and improvidence is, we have only to consider the history of the College property for a considerable period of the past. Trinity College sub-let their lands in this island to a middleman, and he in turn sub-let to some large tenants, who in a short time assumed the airs of gentlemen, and let their lands to cottiers and small farmers at extravagant rents. It was not to be expected that those needy sub-middlemen would effect improvements, neither could the tenants, who were so heavily weighted; and who might at any moment have their improvements confiscated. Some, however, in the midst of every discouragement, built fair houses, and fenced and reclaimed their lands. The lease expired in 1865, and what, your readers will ask, was the action of the Provost and Fellows of Trinity College? Did they endeavour to improve the condition of things indirectly created by their own action? Did they remove the weight from off the shoulders of the tenants, as other landlords did, when the middleman's lease dropped?

Far from it. They condemned and repudiated the action of the middlemen, as they do in this pamphlet, but they

profited by their extortions by pocketing their rack-rents. Some of the tenants having loudly complained and called for redress, what next was the action of the Provost and Fellows, of Trinity College? They send down from Dublin a Mr. Gale, who travelled through the place for a few days without asking for or taking into account the improvements effected by the tenants, and who, seeing some lands cheaper than others, remedies the inequality by increasing the rent on the improving tenant, and reducing it on the non-improving and thriftless tenant. The new rental, which the tenants fondly hoped would lessen their burdens, is higher than the old, according to the College authorities, by £26 18*s.* 4*d.*

What have they done since 1869? To some tenants willing to improve they have refused to lend, and to some others they have lent money at nearly 8 per cent., repayable in half-yearly instalments, with the galling clause that on the non-payment of any single instalment the Provost, Fellows, &c., will be at liberty to proceed at once for the recovery of the entire amount. Within the last few years they have occasionally given bags of Indian meal to some of the tenants, thereby acknowledging the existing distress, though all declare it to be the most demoralising system of tenant improvement. How much better would it not be to let their lands at a fair rent, and allow the tenants to live in some kind of independence, and not like beggars on a system of out-door relief. But the Provost and Fellows boldly assert that Griffith's valuation is acknowledged to be too low in this district. People who know

more about it than the Fellows of Trinity College assert, on the contrary, that taking into account the quality of the soil and the remoteness from markets, Griffith's valuation is as much as should be paid; and if they have been hitherto paid their high rents, they have to thank the slate quarries which have given employment to nine-tenths of their people.

Last year I made application to the Board of Trinity College to allow a small grant to clothe the poorer class of their tenants' children, who attend the National Schools of the island. Those children used to form 70 per cent. of the average attendance at one of the schools when prosperous times prevailed; but latterly, owing to their want of clothing, some not having sufficient for the requirements of decency, they have been in great part kept away by their parents. Not wishing to see them brutalised by ignorance, I asked for help from the College to enable their parents to send them to school. I even suggested to them to select others to be associated with me in its distribution. The answer was a polite but plain refusal.—I am, your obedient servant,

THOMAS LAWLOR, P.P.

FIRST LETTER OF MR. RUSSELL IN REPLY.

SIR,—I now, with your permission, proceed to notice, as briefly as possible, the signed letters which have appeared in your columns questioning the accuracy of my statements. I would first, however, desire to say a word upon a point more than once alluded to. It seems to be

suggested by some of my critics that before publishing the result of my observation and inquiry I ought to have sent my letters to the landlord or agent in each case for correction and revision. It only needs a moment's consideration to show that this is both unreasonable and impracticable. The most that one can do is to take reasonable pains to satisfy oneself of the truth of the statements made. I proceed to show that the result of the criticism bestowed on my letters goes far to make apparent the pains which I did take to test the accuracy of the information given to me.

1. The first complaining correspondent is Mrs. O'Mahony. I alluded in my letter published on Nov. 12, to the case of a tenant on the property of a Miss Hewson, situated near Kenmare, and whose rent was £45, as compared with the Government valuation of £12 10*s.*, and who had been obliged, under threat of eviction three or four years since, to pay an increase of 50 per cent. Incidentally the former owner was alluded to as "one Mahony, of Cork," of whom it was stated that, before he sold the land to Miss Hewson, he raised the rent in order to sell it at a higher price.

Mrs. Frances O'Mahony.

The main or principal statement has not been questioned, but Mrs. O'Mahony writes to complain. I fear I must plead guilty to what I think is Mrs. O'Mahony's principal complaint. I was wrong in describing Mr. O'Mahony, belonging as he did "to one of the oldest families in the county of Kerry, and owning an estate which had descended through a long line of ancestors," as "one Mahony, of Cork." I beg to apologise for having done so.

But I fear I cannot retract my observations on the subject of Mr. O'Mahony's dealings with the property. On reading Mrs. O'Mahony's spirited letter I thought it right to have inquiry made on the spot by a trustworthy person. I now have before me his report, of which, if Mrs. O'Mahony will be good enough to let me know her address, I shall gladly send her a copy in case she desires to investigate further my statements. In his report my informant states:

"I visited almost every house on the property held by the late Mr. John Mahony, and to no single fact put forward by Mr. Russell could Mrs. Mahony or any other person give a contradiction."

He further states:

"I have before me one of the 'Final Notices' to the tenants, giving notice of the sale of the property by Mr. Mahony, or his trustees, Florence Mahony and Francis Sugrue. The notice bears date March 9, 1859. Previous to this sale Mr. Mahony simply doubled the rental on the Greenane property, which was sold by him to one Colonel Goff. It is not true that he collected no rents, as Mrs. Mahony states. Every penny which was made on these farms went to him. They are all grazing farms, producing nothing but butter as an agricultural produce, and he, being a butter merchant, got all the butter which was made on them. If the full rent, therefore, was not paid, the reason simply was the produce of the farms in those years was not sufficient to pay the rent."

Again, he adds:

"There is no disputing the fact that the rental was increased with a view to sale, for the increase was put on only one gale previous to the sale of the property. Mr. Mahony did not charge the increase himself, but accepted

one penny from each tenant, and gave a receipt in full for the rent, including the increase. The tenants agreed to the arrangement on the understanding that Mr. Mahony would not charge the increase. One tenant named Rearden, however, objected, and was in consequence evicted by Mr. Mahony. The property was sold, and the tenants have been obliged to pay the increase ever since."

Of the portion of the estate sold by Mr. O'Mahony to Miss Hewson my informant reports:

"The rental of this place when Mr. Mahony bought it was £100. At the time of the sale he increased it to £145, though none of the Board of Works money had been borrowed for this place or expended on it."

He adds the following remarkable statement:

"I should state, however, that the people entertain the kindliest feelings for Mr. Mahony, and they believe had he retained the property himself, he would never have increased the rental in the same manner as he did at the time of the sale."

This does not appear to be a very hard-hearted or unkindly tenantry.

2. In my second letter, published on Nov. 9, I referred to the miserable tenantry of Mr. E. Morrogh Bernard, at Roads, near Kells, Cahirciveen, which I myself visited, and I gave the story of one of the tenants from her own lips. What evil genius tempted Mr. Bernard to write I know not. He must, I should think, by this time, deeply regret it. I refer your readers to Canon Brosnan's letter of the 21st inst., published, Sir, in your columns, and ask them to say whether the letter does not show that I have, with studious moderation,

Mr. E. Morrogh Bernard.

understated the case. Mr. Bernard's only rejoinder to Canon Brosnan's crushing statement is that it is a fac-simile of my own. If this means anything it means that I got my information from Canon Brosnan, and that, therefore, his corroboration counts for nothing. In this Mr. Morrogh Bernard is entirely incorrect. I never wrote to or saw Canon Brosnan in my life, and I never had a communication from him until within the last few days. The fact that his statement agrees with the information given to me on inquiry on the spot, from the tenants themselves, is the strongest proof of the substantial truth of the story I have told.

3. To Mr. Bland's moderate letter I have little to say.

Mr. Bland.

I referred to his property as being rented at about double Griffith's valuation. He says it is not so, but admits it is rented more than 50 per cent. higher than that valuation. The information was given to me (as I stated in my letter) by one connected with the agency, but, of course, it may have been incorrect.

I am inclined, however, to think that, if Mr. Bland will examine the figures again, and consider the question apart from cases in which additions have been made to Griffith's valuation, owing to new house or other building, the statement made to me, and which I have put forward, will not be found to be substantially incorrect. This is a point which I must explain later in reference to Lord Lansdowne's rental, and which is not generally understood.

4. What am I to say as to Lord Edmond Fitzmaurice's smartly-worded epistle? If it were not that I might seem wanting in respect to him, I

Lord Edmond Fitzmaurice.

should pass it by. In truth, in his two columns of chaffy criticism, there is hardly a grain of real contradiction in fact. I must make this good by an examination of the letter itself.

As to the drainage loan question, I reserve that until I come to the Marquis of Lansdowne's letter. Lord Edmond speaks of the testimony of one priest whom he names—cited by one of your contemporaries—the qualified testimony I shall call it—to Lord Lansdowne's character as a landlord.

I wish to say that I agree with Lord Edmond; the priests are by no means unfriendly to Lord Lansdowne personally, a fact which makes their criticism all the stronger. Indeed, Lord Lansdowne has been exceedingly kind to many priests on his property, in conferring upon them, on easy, if not nominal, terms, glebe farms, and it would be strange, indeed, if they did not appreciate his consideration.

Lord Edmond resents my calling the Protestant rector as a witness, apparently only for the reason that he thinks Ireland's internal affairs might be better managed in Ireland than in the overworked Parliament at St. Stephen's. Of the rector I must, on my part, say I should not desire to meet a more candid-minded or manly gentleman. He seems deservedly held in high estimation.

I learned with pleasure from some of Lord Lansdowne's Tuosists tenants how in their time of trial last year a large number of them waited upon Mr. M'Cutcheon to get his assistance in forming a local relief committee, and how he stood by them like a man. I only wish there

were more rectors like him. Lord Edmond also seems to resent my having called upon the Nun of Kenmare, as she is called. If I am not misinformed, Lord Lansdowne frequently does her the honour of calling upon her, and has done so both before and since my visit to the kingdom of Kerry. Why should not I? She was the means of raising a large sum for the relief of the poor, while landlords, whose estates were princely, raised nothing. Who better could inform me of the circumstances of the late distressful time?

Lord Edmond says a foolish report got about that I had come from some mysterious quarter—meaning some Government quarter—to make out a case against Lord Lansdowne.

He adds: "This report, of course, was unfounded." This is hardly candid. I never heard the report. Who set it going? But, as Lord Edmond now gives it currency, I wish, in the clearest and most emphatic way, to say that there is no particle of foundation for it. I went at the instance of no one connected with Government, nor, so far as I know, to the knowledge of any one so connected. I went for the reasons stated in my letters.

Lord Edmond states—what I for the first time learn from his letter—that one man who gave me information in Kenmare was connected with Fenianism. It happens, oddly enough, that the respectable people of the principal town on Lord Lansdowne's estate, and who formed themselves into a relief committee, entrusted this person with the important post of secretary. He was thus the

repository of information as to the distress and its relief most valuable. His statements to me were confined to matters known to him in his official capacity.

But Lord Edmond's reference to gaol in connection with his name is not only ungenerous but unjust. Michael Cronin's was not an uncommon case. On inquiry I learn that in 1866, when ordinary safeguards of liberty were suspended, he was arrested as a suspected Fenian. He was never brought to trial or charged with any legal offence. Lord Edmond is inaccurate in saying that I quoted an observation made to me by the Nun of Kenmare, imputing to Mr. Trench an inhuman sentiment in reference to the impending distress. I quoted from a printed paper which I knew had been widely circulated, and which I had never heard was contradicted. This is a matter which rests between the lady and Mr. Trench. I said, and I said sincerely, I hoped that it would turn out to be the result of misunderstanding.

Lord Edmond's denial of the existence of a ward known as the Lansdowne Ward, in New York Hospital, is singularly unfortunate. He says he "not long ago" asked a friend to inquire where the hospital was, and whether any such ward existed, or had existed, and that he was informed the story was an impudent invention. I would call Lord Edmond's attention to a very satisfactory explanation why his friend was unable "not long ago" to discover the hospital. It is to be found in the following letter, published in the *Freeman's Journal*, of November 22, and runs thus:

"33, Curzon Street, South Circular Road,
"*November* 20, 1880.

"Dear Sirs,—The information that Lord Edmond Fitzmaurice received from his charitable 'friend' as to the non-existence of the Lansdowne Ward in New York Hospital is quite correct. The New York Hospital stood in Duane Street, and was pulled down to make room for an extensive dry goods house twelve years ago. But this much I can assert, from personal knowledge, that there *was* a ward known by the name of The Lansdowne in the hospital, and was as well known then to New Yorkers as Lansdowne Road is to Dubliners to-day. If you think the communication of any value, you may publish it.

"Eugene O'Connell.

"P.S.—I may add that I am a New Yorker by birth, and any old resident of there can bear out my statement."

Lord Edmond will see that the writer gives his name and address. Lord Edmond is not just in saying that I made an attack upon his grandfather in reference to the Famine emigration from Kerry. I refer the candid reader to what I have said upon this point, which Lord Edmond Fitzmaurice gives me no reason in any way to qualify. I cited the father of the present agent of Lord Lansdowne as the historian of that sad event.

I pass by Lord Edmond's pleasantries at my expense. I do not take them as unkindly meant. I make no complaint. As to the observation that the boulder-stones of the Kerry mountains do not grow turnips, I may observe that, whether they do or do not grow turnips, for the

tenants, they do, in the aggregate, produce a very imposing amount of rent for the landlords.

I utterly deny that my account of the Marquis of Lansdowne as a landlord deserves to be characterised as Lord Edmond, at the conclusion of his letter, has done. His statement is as inaccurate a description of what I have said as it is grossly misleading to describe Lord Lansdowne "as a landlord whose liberality and justice have succeeded in producing what may be called English comfort on Irish soil."

Finally, Lord Edmond winds up with a postscript hardly courteous and wholly erroneous. He says that my assertion that no branches of the Land League exist in Kerry is as inaccurate as most of my other statements. To begin with, this was not my assertion; my assertion was that when I visited Kerry there was no branch of that body in the county. This was one of my reasons for selecting Kerry. I desired to see the condition of things for myself in a district in which discontent had had no public voice. I wished to judge for myself whether the suggestion commonly made was true, that Irish discontent was principally the fabrication of the Land Leaguers. I have been at considerable pains to ascertain the exact truth, and I find my statement was strictly accurate. In October the first Land League branch in Kerry was established in Tralee, North Kerry. My visit to South Kerry was in September. I feel I have given too much attention to this letter; certainly more than its matter deserves. I have done so out of respect to Lord Edmond Fitzmaurice.

5. I read with pain the letter of Lady Fitzgerald. If I may respectfully say so, it is impossible not to sympathise with the feelings which prompted it. I desire to say I would gladly have omitted all reference to the management of the Knight of Kerry's property, if I thought I could honestly do so. I came to the conclusion I could not. I think a perusal of my letter will show I desired to touch as lightly as possible upon it.

Lady Fitzgerald.
Mr. R. Fitzgerald.

Mr. Fitzgerald's letter was signally rash. In my own vindication I cannot do better than refer to the Report of the meeting held at Cahirciveen, and briefly noticed in your issue of Friday, the 3rd inst., thus:

"A large and representative meeting has been held at Cahirciveen of the Iveragh Land League, Canon Brosnan in the chair, to receive the report of a sub-committee appointed to make a personal investigation into the statements put forward by Mr. Fitzgerald on behalf of the Knight of Kerry in contradiction to Mr. Charles Russell's letters in the *Daily Telegraph*. The report went minutely into each case, disproving the allegations of Mr. Fitzgerald, and substantiating the statements of Mr. Russell, who, by a unanimous resolution, was warmly thanked for bringing the light of public opinion to bear on the condition of the tenantry in and around Cahirciveen."

The details are gone into in the *Freeman's Journal*, which gives the report of the Committee of Inquiry fully. I cannot ask for space for this. I wish, however, to say—as it is just to do—that Mr. Fitzgerald speaks of a large labour expenditure by his family yearly. This is not, however, in contradiction of any assertion of mine.

I think it due also to the family of the Knight of Kerry to make one statement. They are certainly not to be confounded with owners who, living at a distance and drawing their rents, do nothing to share or to relieve the trials of their tenants. While I can retract nothing which I have stated as to the general condition of the Knight's tenants; while I think the management is a paternal despotism of an injurious kind; while I think the estate illustrates the vices of the system which I am attacking—it is due to the ladies of the Knight's family to say they have done what is in the power of kind-hearted and intelligent ladies to do in order to make the poor around them feel that they are not in their afflictions wholly friendless.

In my next, and concluding letter, I shall deal with the printed statement of the authorities of Trinity College, and with the letters of the Marquis of Lansdowne.—I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

CHARLES RUSSELL.

TEMPLE, *December* 7.

FURTHER REPLY OF MR. RUSSELL.

SIR,—I now proceed to reply to the Marquis of Lansdowne's letters. Allow me to say *in limine* I have not now, nor have I ever had, any desire to single out Lord Lansdowne as an instance of bad landlordism. I have heard him spoken of by many persons for whose judgment I have respect, as not alone a high-

Lord Lansdowne.

minded, but a considerate, man. I most willingly believe this. All the same, I cannot avoid the conclusion which I have stated in these letters, that the management of his estates is a despotism of a bad and injurious kind, which does little to soften the harshness of the land system which it is my object to attack.

I shall endeavour to meet Lord Lansdowne's statements point by point.

The matters as to which the Marquis challenges my accuracy are these: First—As to the suggestion of his making profit by borrowing money from Government for drainage purposes; Secondly—As to charging to his tenants exorbitant prices for the lime which he supplies to them; Thirdly—As to the rent increases imposed on the Iveragh tenants.

Government or Board of Works Loans.

1. *Government or Board of Works Loans.*—It is to be observed that I was not the first person to call public attention to the complaints made by Lord Lansdowne's tenants. My letter alluding to them was not published until Nov. 15, 1880. On Nov. 12 there appeared in the columns of another journal a letter written by a special commissioner of that journal, who mentions these and several other matters as grievances alleged by the tenants against Lord Lansdowne and his agent, Mr. Trench. He says that the charge of making a profit out of the Board of Works Relief Loans was "an accusation more loudly urged than any of the others;" and adds, "I pointed out to Mr. Trench that while Lord Lansdowne would have

paid off the loan, both principal and interest, in thirty-five years, there was nothing to prevent the tenant continuing to pay for ever the addition of 5 per cent. to his rent." Mr. Trench's reply is important. The correspondent proceeds, "Mr. Trench said he had no instructions on this point, but as it was usual to revise rents every twenty-one years, he had no doubt Lord Lansdowne would act fairly by his tenants."

On the evening of the publication of this letter a reply was addressed by Lord Edmond Fitzmaurice to the paper containing it, in which, having quoted the passage relating to the drainage money, he says, "In regard to the above matter I shall be obliged if you will kindly allow me to state that the proper course to be ultimately pursued towards the Kerry tenantry in regard to the loans has already received Lord Lansdowne's consideration."

I find from a letter of Lord Lansdowne, which is before me, that, in the summer of 1879, he offered drainage employment with the Board of Works moneys (repayable by him in twenty-two years at £6 10*s.* per cent. per annum principal and interest), for which he proposed to charge his tenants a perpetual rent increase of 5 per cent. per annum.

Later in that year, in November, I find from another letter of Lord Lansdowne, which also is before me, that he amended that offer by relieving the tenants from any interest for three years, but after that date the perpetual rent increase was to be £5 per centum.

I shall presently show the profit from the public moneys which the carrying out by the tenants of either of those

offers would have secured to Lord Lansdowne. The figures are startling. At the latter date, when the distress had declared itself, the same question was addressed to Lord Lansdowne as was addressed to his agent by the correspondent mentioned a year later. We have seen Mr. Trench's reply. Lord Lansdowne, at that earlier date, said, "You are perfectly right in assuming that, after three years, the 5 per cent. will be a permanent addition to the rent. I see no reason for departing from the usual practice of the estate in regard to this point."

By his lordship's letters which appeared in the *Daily Telegraph* of Nov. 27 and 30, 1880, he admits he was informed by the Board of Works towards the end of January that he was to pay only 1 per cent. on the £5000 drainage loan sanctioned for him on Dec. 27; he admits that every tenant, before commencing work, was required to sign a printed agreement, binding himself to pay as a perpetual rent-increase 5 per cent. upon the sums paid to him, and that of these agreements forty-eight were signed subsequent to the end of January, 1880. In fact, the matter stands thus—that, whether the money advanced to the tenants was money borrowed from the State at 5 per cent., but repayable, principal and interest, at £6 10*s.* per cent., in 22 years, or whether it was money borrowed at 1 per cent. per annum interest, to begin after two years, and repayable, principal and interest, at £3 8*s.* 6*d.* per cent. in thirty-five years—in each case the tenant was called upon to bind himself to pay as a perpetual addition to his rent £5 per annum for each £100 borrowed.

If, therefore, in November, 1879, the Marquis wrote

that the tenants should pay a perpetual rent-increase of 5 per cent. per annum on the drainage loans; if, subsequent to the date when he knew, when his agent knew, and when his tenants knew, that the rate charged by the Board of Works on the loan was reduced to 1 per cent., he still continued to make the tenants sign, or allowed the tenants to sign, agreements to pay the perpetual increase of 5 per cent.; and if, up to November, 1880, notwithstanding that the injustice of these agreements was (in the language of the correspondent cited) an "accusation more loudly urged than any of the others," the Marquis's agent admitted he had received no instructions to vary the terms of these agreements—I do not think the Marquis can wonder if his tenants should believe his intention was to insist strictly on those terms being carried out, and so realise the large rate of profit which I shall presently mention, out of the money borrowed by him from the State on exceptionally low terms. However, I willingly admit, and, indeed, I said in my original letter, referring to the matter, that the belief may have been the result of misapprehension. The Marquis now distinctly states that for the money borrowed by him from the State at 1 per cent., and repayable by him in thirty-five yearly instalments of £3 8*s.* 6*d.* each, the tenants shall not be called upon to pay more than £3 8*s.* 6*d.* per annum.

But, again, this is far from satisfactory. He does not say that these yearly instalments shall in the case of the tenants, as in his own case, be limited to thirty-five yearly payments, and shall not be perpetual. Unless so

limited, a palpable injustice will be done to the tenants. Nay, I fear Lord Lansdowne still leaves it in doubt whether the payment will or will not be perpetual—if, indeed, he does not actually mean to convey that it will be perpetual. I am driven to say this because of a paragraph in Lord Lansdowne's letter, which, if I interpret it rightly, sets up a claim of an extraordinary character. He says: "Some of Mr. Russell's informants appear to have laid stress upon the fact that no engagement was given to the tenants to the effect that the rent-charge payable by them should terminate with that payable by the landlord. Upon this point I will only observe that it is impossible to determine beforehand the length of time during which the land will be benefited by drainage, and that as the rent-charge payable by me or my successors will not terminate until A.D. 1917, the amount of rent which, when that time comes, will be payable by the tenants, and which must depend upon the then circumstances of their holdings, is scarcely a matter for present consideration."

The inference from this passage would seem to be that Lord Lansdowne considers that the State advances money at a low rate for drainage purposes in order to benefit the landlord; that the tenant is to construct the drains, receiving from the landlord a sum in payment of the entire or portion of the cost of them—which sum the landlord borrows from the State, repayable by terminable instalments—which instalments the tenant pays to the landlord, and that then, when the instalments to the State have ceased, the improvements effected by the drainage

(the entire cost of which the tenant has thus *ex hypothesi* paid) are or may be made the ground on which the tenant is to be made to pay an increased rent in the shape of a perpetual annuity in the name of interest! Can it be possible that his lordship desires to maintain this proposition?

From the statement of facts detailed by the Marquis of Lansdowne in reference to the drainage loans one thing is abundantly proved, viz., the total inability of the tenants to resist the landlords' terms, no matter how unreasonable or exorbitant these may be. It is this point I desire specially to emphasise. His lordship has shown us that the office procured forty-eight tenants to sign a contract to pay him a perpetual annuity of £5 for each £100 borrowed by him from the State, on a terminable annuity of £3 8*s*. 6*d*. for thirty-five years. If that contract were kept strictly, it would amount to this, that for a terminable annuity payable by his lordship, the present capital value of which is £100, he would have obtained from his tenant a perpetual annuity, the present State value of which at the same rate of interest is £485! The Marquis now says he does not insist upon the carrying out of this contract; but that he was able to insist on the tenants entering into it, is a clear proof of their helplessness.

From his lordship's letters he would seem to convey that the terms on which he usually lent out to his tenants the moneys borrowed by him from the Board of Works are just, if not generous. Without hesitation I give him credit for believing that on these terms he was reaping no profit from the loans, but the figures

appear to me to point so clearly in the opposite direction that I have submitted them to an actuary, who has verified the startling results which I now give.

The usual terms on which the Board of Works advanced the drainage money to landords were £3 10*s.* per cent. interest, and a sinking fund of £3, payable during twenty-two years. In other words, for £100 the landlord paid an annuity of £6 10*s.*, which extinguished principal and interest in twenty-two years. The present capital value of this annuity is £100. This £100 his lordship lent again to the tenants, and his first proposition, in the summer of 1879, was that they should pay to him a perpetual annuity of £5 to commence from the date of the loan. The present capital value of this annuity is £143.

The second proposition in November, 1879, was that they should pay a perpetual annuity of £5, but not to commence until the expiration of three years from the date of the loan. The present capital value of this annuity is £129. In the above calculations the rate of interest is throughout taken at £3 10*s.* per cent., viz., the rate charged by the Board of Works to the landlord. The reduced or "cheap" terms on which the Board of Works advanced the money to Lord Lansdowne during the distress were £1 per cent. interest, and a sinking fund of £2 8*s.* 6*d.*, making together £3 8*s.* 6*d.* payable during thirty-five years, to commence from the expiration of two years from the date of the advance. In other words, the landlord, at the expiration of two years, would begin paying an annuity of £3 8*s.* 6*d.* per cent., which, in thirty-five years, would extinguish both principal and interest. The

present capital value of this annuity is (at 1 per cent. interest) £100.

According to his lordship's third proposition, viz., the contract signed by his tenants in February, they would have been obliged to pay a perpetual annuity of £5, the present capital value of which, at 1 per cent., as I have already said, would be £485. Let us assume his fourth proposition, viz., the contracts of February, as modified by his letters to the *Daily Telegraph*, to be that the tenants are to pay a perpetual annuity of £3 8*s*. 6*d*., to commence at the expiration of three years from the date of the advance. The present capital value of this annuity, at 1 per cent., would be £332.

From these figures it is plain that, after making the most liberal deductions and allowance for the the cost of collection, &c., the terms admittedly charged to the tenants would, in each case, represent a large profit on the money borrowed by Lord Lansdowne from the State and re-lent by him to the tenants.

For example, let us suppose that he borrowed from the State and then lent to his tenants for drainage purposes the sum of £10,000. The sums payable by the tenants to Lord Lansdowne for this money would represent, according to the first terms, £14,300; according to the second terms, £12,900; according to the third terms, £48,500; according to the fourth terms, £33,200!

This disposes of the first point on which Lord Lansdowne challenged my criticism. I have been tempted to go into this detail because I have long feared many landlords in Ireland were making a profit out of the public loans which the Legislature did not intend. This

warning may be of use. When one finds such views as I have set forth entertained by men of the position and character of Lord Lansdowne, what may not one expect to find in less reliable quarters?

I hold it to be of great importance to watch with jealous scrutiny, lest what was in distressful times intended to benefit the people should be turned to the private profit of landlords. Moreover, these public moneys have been made to serve many purposes. I am speaking of many parts of Ireland, not of Kerry only. If it be objected that the landlord has contributed nothing to the relief funds, his answer commonly is, "Help in that form is demoralising; it is bad according to true political economy. I have done better, for I have given useful and remunerative employment" — meaning thereby with Board of Works moneys. If it be objected that no rent abatement is made in view of late disastrous seasons, the answer is, "To abate the rent would amount to little, and, moreover, would weaken the tenants' sense of the obligations of contract. I have done better. I have put them in the way of paying their rent by well-paid employment"—meaning thereby with Board of Works moneys.

There is no doubt without these drainage moneys many of the tenants receiving them could not pay their rents, and that the moneys in great part returned to the landlords' pockets as rent. There is also no doubt that complaints of insufficient payment for the work done by the tenants have been frequent. All these circumstances combine to justify close scrutiny in the dealings with these public moneys.

2. I now come to the question of the prices charged for lime. In my letter I observed "I understand that Lord Lansdowne does not admit having prohibited the tenants using their own kilns, but undoubtedly the impression that he did so prevails in Kenmare." This statement is literally accurate: it is supported by the evidence of the correspondent already named. Lord Lansdowne has now publicly stated he did not intend to prohibit his tenants burning lime in their own kilns. I accept his denial without hesitation. At the same time it is only proper to add, I have, even since Lord Lansdowne's letter appeared, received ample evidence that the impression exists that not alone was the prohibition given, but that it was effectually enforced in several instances by the fact of the tenants' kilns being demolished by Mr. Trench's orders. But, accepting this statement of Lord Lansdowne unreservedly, I must point out that his letter leaves wholly unanswered the serious part of the tenants' complaints as to the lime. Even if they had been prohibited lime-burning, but had been supplied by the estate limekilns with lime on reasonable terms, the ground of complaint would have been small indeed.

Alleged Excessive Lime charge.

These are the facts as stated to and by me: 1st, That there are not, and have not been for years since the supposed prohibition, any working limekilns on Lord Lansdowne's Kenmare estate save in the town of Kenmare. 2nd, That until the last year or two, in addition to Lord Lansdowne's, there was in that town only one limekiln, which latter was worked by a lessee of his lordship; but some disputes having arisen between Mr.

Trench and this lessee the limekiln of the latter was closed, and thereupon the Marquis became undisputed owner of a monopoly in supplying lime to the tenants on the estate, and, indeed, to the neighbourhood. 3rd, That the Marquis ought to be able without loss to sell lime to his tenants at 1*s.* to 1*s.* 3*d.* per barrel. This is the opinion of the very experienced gentleman whom I have called as a witness—Mr. S. M. Hussey, Lord Kenmare's agent. 4th, That the rise in price to 2*s.* 6*d.* per barrel was both serious and sudden. 5th, That at the time of the rise there was no increase in the cost of production. 6th, That the time selected for this serious and sudden rise was the period when the distress was most acute. 7th, That the alternative to any tenant who required lime to manure his ground was to pay 2*s.* 6*d.* per barrel for it, or sign the printed agreement to pay a permanent increase to his rent of 1*d.* per barrel per annum. These are the simple facts of which the tenants complain, and I must say I fail to see that Lord Lansdowne has in any way met them.

Iveragh Rent-raisings.

3. The remaining matter in respect of which Lord Lansdowne has impugned my accuracy, is as to the amount of the rents and rent-increase on his Iveragh estate. On this point I have been saved the necessity of going into an extended vindication, for, within the past few days, there has been published in the press a document which attests the accuracy of the facts and figures put forward by me—I mean the declaration signed by upwards of eighty tenants on Lord Lansdowne's Iveragh estate. It has been referred to, Sir, in your columns, and is in the following words:

"We, the undersigned tenants of the Iveragh estate of the Marquis of Lansdowne, having seen a letter of his lordship's in the *Daily Telegraph*, in which he states that the description given by Charles Russell, Q.C., M.P., of the increase of rent imposed on the tenants of this estate, is absolutely misleading, do hereby declare that Mr. Russell's statement is accurate, and does truly represent the history of this estate for the last thirty years."

Lord Lansdowne says he recognises the cases to which my figures refer, but he denies the accuracy of those figures. It would have been more convenient if he had pointed out what the inaccuracies were. The points in difference might thus have been cleared up. My information may of course have been wrong in some particulars. I should most readily admit any errors which have crept into my letters. I challenge criticism and correction. I should injure the cause I desire to promote if I advanced facts which can be disproved. I cannot pretend to have been accurate in all details. I think I have so far shown that I have spared no pains to be accurate.

Lord Lansdowne, referring to the case in which the tenant helped me to present an approximate balance-sheet, seemed to think that he had disposed of that illustration by pointing out that, on the tenant's showing, he would have have lost on his farming last year even if he were rent-free. Does Lord Lansdowne think that surprising or improbable? I do not. I think in recent years the cases are many in which, after the support of his family, the tenant would not only have no balance left to pay rent, but would be out of pocket. I am sure there

are many such cases in South Kerry of late. I am not sure there have not also been many such cases in England.

In reference to the comparison of actual rent with Griffith's or Government valuation, I desire to make some observations of general application. From what I have said in previous letters it is clear that Griffith's valuation is no necessary test of what a fair rent should be. It may either be too low a figure for a fair rent, or it may be, as I pointed out, though not so frequently, too high for a fair rent. But there is one other matter to be considered, which has a disturbing influence upon the valuation as a rent test. It is this. Practically no alteration has been made since 1852 in Griffith's valuation *except* in the case of new houses or buildings. In that case there is a new valuation. In other words the old valuation is increased by the amount which the valuator thinks right to put on the entire holding is respect of such new buildings. It is clear that every such addition brings the valuation closer to the actual rent.

In all cases, therefore, in which the tenant has built new buildings the valuation is altered and raised; but I need hardly point out that although thereby the Government valuation is brought closer to the figure of the rent, it does not follow that the latter may not be an excessive rent. That is to say, the addition to the valuation has taken place by reason of the improvements in buildings, which in many cases the tenant himself has effected, and for which in practically all cases he pays, while no such improvements affect the productive character of the soil.

It would, therefore, follow that in all cases in which the

landlords have—as Lord Lansdowne has properly done—tried to improve the character of their tenants' dwellings, that the difference between the rent and the valuation will be less than where no such improvements have been effected, although from the considerations I have presented above, it is obvious that the latter may be the less highly rented, the former the more highly rented holdings.

I hope I have treated Lord Lansdowne's letters with the consideration they deserve. I have meant to do so. I now leave them; but I feel justified in asking the attention of those who have followed this correspondence to the story of that last rent-increase of 25 per cent. all round, on the Iveragh tenants, which I have told; and I would ask them to say, Does Lord Lansdowne really meet it?

Once more—and I trust for the last time—I shall have to trouble you with some observations upon the statement issued by the authorities of Trinity College.—I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

CHARLES RUSSELL.

TEMPLE, *December* 10, 1880.

FINAL LETTER OF MR. RUSSELL IN REFERENCE TO TRINITY COLLEGE ESTATE.

SIR,—I now address myself to the printed reply of the authorities of Trinity College. It would seem from this that many injurious reports affecting their character as landlords at Cahirciveen have been during the present

year in circulation. Accordingly, in a pamphlet of some twenty-three pages they defend themselves.

As in great part this statement does not concern assertions of mine, I propose to deal with it briefly, confining my attention to the parts impugning my statements. The College call as their principal witness to character an anonymous correspondent of the *Freeman's Journal*, who gives his evidence under the vague designation of a "Trinity College Tenant." My information as to this correspondent is that at the time he wrote he not only was not a tenant of the College, but was acting as drainage steward under Captain Needham, the agent. The College can easily meet this assertion by disclosing the name of the tenant.

I distrust anonymous corespondents, whether they are landlords or tenants. I hope the English public do so also. The College proceed to show their dealing with this property, and mention the fact that only since 1865, when a middleman's lease came to an end, have they been able to deal as owners with the property.

This case is, indeed, a striking illustration of the evils of the middleman or mid-interest system. The description of the actual condition of things on this estate which I have given is not in any single point controverted. Their case is that since 1865 they have not had time to do much. Indeed, the description of Cahirciveen which they cite from Mr. Foster's Letters, written as far back as 1845—when the late Mr. Daniel O'Connell was the middleman—might be well read with but little alteration as a description in this day. The College say there has been

improvement. I accept their statement, although it is difficult to realise a state of things much more miserable than that now existing.

I gave the College credit in my letter for the outlay which had been made, and I said that Captain Needham had shown a certain amount of consideration in the distressful time. But I cannot say there is much to show for their outlay, or that any considerable part of it has been in the interest of the agricultural tenants. Its major part was in Cahirciveen, expended on a market-house and a fish-market, investments in respect of the use of which the College derive tolls.

They ought also to have credit for the erection of a well-built Protestant school. This fact shows they are not unmindful of the great original object of their institution. I am informed this school is attended by as many as fifteen children.

But of what avail in defence of the College is the statement that only in 1865 did the lease to their middleman come to an end? Why let to the middleman? Is not the answer that the former governing body of the College, wholly regardless of the interests of the actual tillers of the soil and of their own obligations as landlords, let to middlemen at fixed rents, leaving such middlemen unrestrained, careless how the property was hacked and carved, how it was sublet and subdivided, how the tenants were harassed?

But more; the College well know the history of properties in the hands of middlemen. They well know that their only interest is to get as much as possible out of the

land, and that as a rule the worst-treated and highest-rented tenants in Ireland are those under middlemen. Was it not their duty when, in 1865, the mid-interest ceased, to guard themselves against the temptation of pocketing the fruits of a system which they themselves denounce as pernicious? The College do not state the rent which they were paid by the middleman, or what proportion it bears to the amount of rent extracted from these miserable creatures, the existing tenants. These figures would be interesting. They do indeed get some kind of re-valuation made by Mr. Gale, which so far from lessening the rents paid, in the result increases the rent, though in a trifling degree.

I have called attention to the character of that valuation. The important facts I have stated have not been contradicted. I said that within forty years one-third, at least, of the land now in tillage had been reclaimed and made arable without allowance from the landlord. I pointed out that in the cases of these re-valuations no representative of the tenant is called in. More important still, I pointed out that these re-valuations are valuations of the holdings *as they are*, improved by the sweat and labour and small expenditure of money of, it may be, generations of the struggling tillers of the soil. None of these facts do the College deny. Nay, I find I did not do full justice to one point. I learn from the evidence before Lord Bessborough's Commission that the tenants requested to be allowed to name a valuer on their side. This the College refused.

There are some corrections by the College of statements

made by me on minor points. I would be glad, however, to give them the benefit in your columns of these corrections.

As to the broken pavements in the streets of Cahirciveen, they say no contractor would propose for the work at the price named in the presentment. I understand the county surveyor does not admit this reason; but, assuming it to be correct, why did not the College supplement the presentment? They say they are unable to verify the figures given in my letter. The figures of rent were generally taken from the rent pass-books (for which, by the way, the tenants are charged by the office sixpence each!), and the figures of valuation were generally verified by reference to the rate receipts. So far from agreeing with the statement of the College, that Griffith's valuation is in this district very low, my inquiry leads me to the opinion that it is very much nearer a fair rent than the rent charged.

They admit, excluding Cahirciveen, that the valuation is £1900, as against £3500 rent paid. Bearing in mind the observations made in my last letter as to the increase in Government valuation where buildings are made, and excluding such cases, I think the rent will be found to be more than double the valuation. They say that in the case of the tenant who received an advance for his house-building, repayable by forty yearly instalments, be omitted mention of a cash payment of £24 10*s.*, for which he was charged no interest. I at once, without inquiry, accept this correction. But the College apparently fail to see that the point in that case was the harsh

agreement by which, if the tenant failed in any one instalment, he might at once be sued for the entire amount. I said, and I repeat, that this was not very liberal treatment on the part of a great corporation. As to the man the rent of whose land had been raised from £8 to £26 10*s.*, they say their valuers did not so raise it. I quite agree; but I never said they did. I only said that one of such rises of rent had been made by their valuer. They deny that any retrospective increase of rent was made by them. I accept their statement. I admit it might be supposed from the context I was referring to the College. The statement was not, however, intended to apply to them.

In reference to the answer of the Bursar in 1879 to the request of the tenant for drainage money, and requiring him to sign an agreement to pay the increased rent of 1*s.* 7*d.* in the pound for each pound advanced, the College say that such payment would repay principal and interest in twenty-one years. I willingly accept their statement that this is what they intend. It is a pity that their Bursar did not say so. It is no wonder that the tenants should look on the increase as permanent, as unquestionably they did in the cases cited to me. No doubt the College intended one thing, but the written terms stipulated for a different thing.

I accept the statement of the College, that Captain Needham, the College agent, in his character of magistrate, opposed the increase of spirit licences in Cahirciveen, but I did not convey the contrary. The College do, I think, give some reasons to show that, although anxious to effect

drainage on a large scale, there were practical difficulties in their way. The College are entitled to credit for their statement that they distributed £500 worth of meal at cost price—no part of which has yet been repaid—and also that they supplied potatoes at half-price, at a loss to the college of £260.

They say in correction of my statement, that instead of 200 processes against their tenants there were not 100. I do not stop to observe that in such times as these this is no small matter. I do not quite understand their denial as to the two-and-sixpenny charge to the bailiff on every process. One main point was that this charge gave the bailiff, who was, I said, regarded by the tenants as a much more formidable person than the agent, a direct interest in making the number of processes as large as possible. I accept the statement that the impression existing that the bailiff's charge of 2*s.* 6*d.* each process was in excess of the legal charge, was not well-founded. Indeed, I understand the College to say they charge less than the full costs. As to the water supply at Cahirciveen, the information given to me does not agree with the statement of the College. But assuming it to be strictly accurate, as I am sure they believe it to be, the yearly interest on the half of £700 ought hardly to have stood in the way of carrying out a water scheme which could not fail to have an important effect upon the cleanly habits of the people, and upon the cleanliness and health of the town itself.

I have the honour of knowing some of the governing body of the College, men whom I deeply respect, men of

large and liberal views. I wish they could be induced to judge this question for themselves, on the spot. I feel confident they could not come to the conclusion that the system existing on this estate and on the neighbouring estates is one conducive to the good of the tenants or of the country. They point to the indolence and unthrift of the people. Let them recollect that, in the language of John Stuart Mill, the Irish tenant is of all persons living the one who has the least motive offered him to induce industry and thrift.

Sir, I cannot close this correspondence without gratefully acknowledging the sacrifices of valuable space which you have made for its admission into your columns. On my part, I wish to declare it has been no pleasure to me to say many things which it seemed to me I ought to say.

I would ask no one to accept my facts, my reasoning, or my conclusions, but to test each for himself. I shall have some reward for a good deal of labour if I succeed in setting the people of England a-thinking for themselves upon this question. If they once set themselves to its candid consideration, I cannot doubt they will soon conclude that the existing land system of Ireland cannot longer be allowed to stand.

Worse than the tree which bears no fruit, it yearly produces widespread pauperism and discontent—discontent all the more dangerous because it springs from real grievances.—I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

CHARLES RUSSELL.

TEMPLE, *Dec.* 13.

FURTHER LETTER OF VERY REV. CANON BROSNAN IN REFERENCE TO TRINITY COLLEGE ESTATE.

SIR,—The Provost and Senior Fellows of Trinity College, in their pamphlet in reply to Mr. Russell's statements, commence characteristically by an attack on the memory of the Liberator, and retail for this purpose the slanders of the *Times* "Gutter Commission" of 1845, conveniently forgetting how fully the charges of that most prejudiced writer were refuted by the late Sir John Gray and others. It is well known here that O'Connell was the kindest of landlords; and if his public labours left him but little time for personal supervision of his estate, he took good care that the tenantry should be treated at all times with kindness and consideration. His character as a landlord has outlived the calumnies of Mr. Foster and the *Times*, and is not likely to be dimmed by the sneers of Trinity College.

When the College came into possession of the Iveragh estate in 1865, a complete reform, if we are to believe the pamphlet, could only be effected "by the eviction of the entire population, or by an effort to induce an improvement in their inveterate habits of indolence and improvidence." This is the character the Fellows of Trinity College deliberately give of their Cahirciveen tenantry, than whom a more industrious and thrifty people it would be difficult to find. It will indeed astonish the merchants of Cork and Dublin, of Manchester and Glasgow, having commercial relations with the town, no

less than all whom chance or business, or travel has made acquainted with the industrious and laborious habits of the rural population. Whether by "the eviction of nearly the entire population" the pamphlet means the town, the country, or both, is not very clear; but, incredible as it may appear, it is nevertheless a fact that the "Provost and Senior Fellows" did contemplate evicting such of the house-owners in Cahirciveen as had let their premises, and recognising the immediate occupiers as direct tenants, at a rent equal to the full valuation. In other words the wealthy Corporation of Trinity College had actually under consideration the expediency of confiscating to their benefit houses built at the sole cost of those indolent and improvident Cahirciveen people. The late Dr. Barry, when this alarming fact became known, was sent as a deputation to the College, and succeeded in inducing the Board, as a compromise, to accept the house-owners as tenants at one shilling and sixpence per frontage in Main Street, and one shilling in the other parts of the town. O'Connell's rent was only nine and threepence per fifty feet, so that the "Provost and Senior Fellows," who, as head landlords, might be expected to act more liberally than the middleman who had held under them, in one part of the town exacted nearly five and a-half times and in the other fully eight times the rent charged by O'Connell. Nay, more, as if repenting of their liberality, they have within the past three or four years raised the rent to three or four shillings on new building lots, or to sixteen times the amount charged by O'Connell! And this is what the College calls "a moderate ground."

"The first step," says the pamphlet, "towards the civilization of the people was the construction by the College of a complete system of sewers." What will be the thought of the candour of the writers when it is stated that the main sewerage of the town, as it exists to-day, was constructed long before they came into possession, and that their work merely supplemented it in a very inefficient manner. The sewer which serves as the principal outlet, and which runs from the Post Office across to the Old Quay, was made in 1837, at O'Connell's sole expense; and the sewer at right angles to it by presentment as a relief work in 1847. Trinity College has lately extended the latter eastward, and constructed some sewers to the back of the houses at the north side of Main Street, which are but little used on account of their faulty construction and not as the "Provost and Senior Fellows" so politely state, because "a majority of the tenants prefer their old habits of indolence and filth." This grossly offensive and outrageous language used by the grave and learned Board of Trinity College towards the people of Cahirciveen, from whom they exact a rental greater than O'Connell paid for his entire portion of the estate, town included, may be taken as a fair index of their contempt and utter absence of sympathy for their tenantry, and the strong necessity for their expropriation.

As connected with the question of sewerage it may be mentioned that the town, situated at the foot of a hill of considerable elevation, suffers frequently from floods. O'Connell, so far back as 1830, took effective steps to protect the town. He had a large watercourse cut along the

base of the hill to intercept the floods, and paid an annual salary to three caretakers charged with keeping this course in order. On his death the work was neglected, and nothing has been done by the College for its restoration. The consequence is that after a heavy rainfall the condition of the town is simply disgraceful. Torrents course down the street, the space in front of the butter market is converted into a lake, houses are flooded, and some of the inhabitants in the centre of the town have to watch with the vigilance of Dutchmen the advent of the dreaded flood.

Since 1865, the College, we are told, has expended on the improvement of this property about £11,000. This will, no doubt, be startling news to the tenants, who will seek in vain for evidences of so large an expenditure. But accepting the statement as correct, which in courtesy we are bound to do, what does it amount to? Why this, that on a rental in fifteen years of £60,000 in round numbers 18 per cent. has been expended on the improvement of the property. As most of the expenditure was made shortly after the College came into possession, and for works of a permanent character, and as the "Provost and Senior Fellows" have since shown little inclination to expend money on the estate, it is obvious that unless they greatly change for the better, the percentage of expenditure on the gross rental will, year by year, "become small by degrees and beautifully less." But it would be fallacious in appraising the liberality of the learned landlords of Cahirciveen to credit them with even a percentage thus reduced. The portion of the expenditure which brings

them an adequate return should be first deducted; will they kindly state the amount, that we may be enabled to solve the problem of their liberality? £1000, for instance, has been expended on the butter market; but with a toll of 2*d.* per firkin, this should bring some 7 per cent. after paying expenses. The Fairfield Cottages, the Coast-guard Station, the National Bank, the premises connected with the College office, and the stores lately built for the Clyde Shipping Company are, doubtless, remunerative investments. A sum of £1500 was probably expended in erecting a school for a score of little Protestant children. This can scarcely be regarded as a benefit to the general tenantry. The National School, conducted by the nuns, in which the great bulk of the female children, and the infants, male and female, on the property about Cahirciveen are taught gratuitously, and whose efficiency attracts the grown-up Protestant girls, is completely ignored by the College. The people have on two occasions memorialised the board for a remission of the ground-rent of £10 imposed on these schools and the residence of the ladies who teach them, which were held free under O'Connell, but in vain. Trinity College, which has been so generous to the Protestant little ones of Cahirciveen, will give no aid whatever to these valuable schools. The Christian Brothers' School and the Boys' National School, which all the grown Protestant boys attend—the latter just outside the College bounds, the former in the town, and both chiefly attended by pupils from the College estate—receive no encouragement from this learned body. Neither is it correct to say the Portmagee National Schools "are in great measure

supported by the College," while seven-eighths of the school income is supplied by the National Board and the pupils' school fees. The pamphlet makes great capital of a letter signed "A Trinity College Tenant," published in the *Freeman's Journal* last August, and a leading article commenting upon it. It is not likely the editorial would have been written if the editor were aware that his correspondent is neither a tenant of Trinity College nor of anybody else. At the time he wrote the letter he was temporarily employed as drainage steward by the College, and in lauding the management of the estate, was, as is well known here, simply fishing for future favours. As he promptly revealed his identity to Captain Needham and the College, it is far from candid of the latter to speak of him as "one of the tenants." His testimony in view of the object for which it was given is utterly unreliable, and the case of the College must be indeed weak when they assign it such prominence.—I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

T. Canon Brosnan.

Cahirciveen, *December* 11.

POSTSCRIPT.

I HAVE found that I could not set out the Statement of the authorities of Trinity College without occupying an amount of space altogether disproportionate to the matters really in controversy between me and them.

In answer to a request that they should furnish me with a summary of their Statement, they have returned me that Statement with only some four pages and a-half (of the twenty-three, of which it originally consisted), excised.

There was some delay in obtaining their answer, and the manuscript was in the printers' hands when it was received. They will, I think, find that I have in my final letter dealt with each disputed allegation.

In conclusion I would ask the reader carefully to weigh what has been alleged by me in each case, and what has been traversed.

To his impartial judgment I now commend these pages.

C. R.

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